



# ISLAMIC CULTURAL STUDIES

[SECOND REVISED & ENLARGED EDITION]

BY

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This is an enlarged edition of the *Islamic Cultural Studies*. It includes three additional papers, two of which deal with Allama Iqbal. One of the two, entitled "Humanism in Iqbal," has a historical significance to the student of Iqbal. It was an address delivered by Dr. Syed Abdul Latif at the very first 'Iqbal Day' held in Hyderabad-Deccan a few months before the great poet-philosopher passed away. Its importance lies in the fact that it was the first attempt ever made to treat Iqbal as a humanist. It is important also for the reason that it was read and appreciated by Iqbal himself. The other paper on Iqbal is in the form of a review of the late Dr. Sachidananda Sinha's voluminous work, *Iqbal : The Poet and His Message*, in which a huge attempt was made to liquidate Iqbal altogether. Dr. Latif has shown that the liquidation of Iqbal is not such an easy affair. This paper is a model of a review and offers to every student of Iqbal the caution and proprieties that one has to observe in any approach made to him.

These fresh additions to the volume lend further support to Dr. Latif's thesis maintained in



various ways that the culture of Islam embodies and displays in its process two fundamental laws of life, the one styled by him as the 'Law of Movement in Life,' the other as the 'Law of Unity in Life,' the two operating together to express the Unity of God in the unity of man.

The papers are all of a piece and emphasize that the supreme objective of Islam is to fulfil the Prophet's vision of mankind developing into a veritable "fold every member of which shall be a shepherd unto every other and be accountable for its welfare."

The need ~~of~~ the hour is to create this shepherd ~~mind among~~ the nations of the world. That is the only way to peace on earth.

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## 2

### THE MUSLIM CULTURE<sup>1</sup>

The question has been raised and repeated more than once : What is the Muslim Culture and where is it to be found in India ? There was a time when such a question could hardly have been even conceived. In academic circles, we used freely to talk of our own peculiar group cultures—the Hindu, the Muslim, the English and so forth—and take delight in recalling to mind our several achievements in the past in the domain of arts, and sciences, and philosophy and life's other expressions. There was no thought on the part of any one group of denying the heritage of another, although a scale of values was always applied by each for the sake of self-satisfaction. The natural intellectual attitude is now being disturbed, and we are being asked, in the name of nationalism, to cease from caring for our individual cultures. Indeed, attempts are being made to treat the culture of the Musalmans in particular, as of no conse-

1. From a lecture delivered in 1938 before the Muslim Culture Society, Hyderabad Deccan.

quence in our present state of modern civilization. Its very existence in any dynamic form at the present day is doubted and challenged, causing a sort of uneasiness among the Muslim intellectuals in every part of the country.

On the face of it, the question is a simple one, and can be answered in a simple straightforward manner from an intellectual plane. Unfortunately, however, as everybody knows, the question has been dictated by reasons not purely intellectual, dictated more to operate as a check against the Muslim desire to safeguard the interests of his culture than to elicit information that may help us to understand and appraise its value to life. Not merely that: it has become part of the plan of those who have devised this question to cry down every answer to it as communalism. That is the situation now. An amusing situation! You ask a question and you refuse to listen to a reply. Even when you give a hearing, you have learnt to say, you are not satisfied: it is all communalism. So, when I have to speak on this subject today, I feel a natural diffidence: for I do not wish to be misunderstood, much less to receive the self-same compliment for the trouble. I may tell you, I am not a

Muslim cultural  
problem, not  
Communalism.

politician and cannot easily follow the jargon of politics. But I should believe that to explain a point of view or an attitude towards life, or to speak out the truth one has in order to dispel ignorance is not communalism. I should also believe that to describe the culture of a people, to show how their mind or genius has manifested itself in their language and literature, in their arts and sciences, in their modes of thought and living, in their personal laws and social and economic order, and in their outlook on life, and to explain how these together give them a distinctive character of their own, is not communalism. Every culture is a living organism. Very often it proceeds from the life of a people only to react on it and receive further volition, and it develops or decays with the life of the people who sustain it. In a few cases, it functions as a living idea, and satisfies some spiritual law of life. It then reacts on humanity at large and introduces a harmony in the clashing interests of class, colour and race. It has no particular habitation of its own, and gives its name to the place it travels and to the people who react to it. If the hands that hold it grow weak, it does not drop itself and disappear. It passes on to other hands and transfers its name to them. Thus it lives and moves on. We do not

judge it by the hands that tremble to hold it, but by the hands that have held it firmly or by the hands that stretch themselves out to give it a welcome. Above all we judge it by its own inherent strength. Wisdom lies not in quarrelling with such a culture for the sake of any passing political end, but in utilizing it as a contributory force to the progress of humanity. It is of such a culture that I propose to speak to you this evening. And I should believe that to do so is not communalism.

If you agree with me so far, my task will be greatly lightened; for then, I shall not stand in need of analysing the political background to the question before us. I should, however, like to clear one or two points before I proceed further.

The subject of the Muslim Culture is too vast to be discussed in a single lecture, and I must explain to you how I should like to approach it so as to give you an idea as to what it is and where it is to be found in India.

The mind of the Muslim has, in the course of history, expressed itself in every culture-field—in the field of action, of thought, and of creation. These are the three great fields in which all human activity is distributed; and in each field, the Muslim has

made a mark for himself. In the field of action, he has evolved a particular type of social and economic order and polity influenced by a jurisprudence of his own worked out into a comprehensive law called the *Shariyah*. In the field of thought, his genius has laid the foundations of modern science and determined its subsequent course. And in the field of creation, what has he not done to enrich and beautify life by his spiritual energy expressing itself out in his literatures, his arts and his philosophy and religion. So, you see, it is a vast culture, every aspect of which is a great subject in itself. Like every other culture, especially in its social aspect, it has reacted, every now and then, to the influences of other cultures ; and this reaction is mostly visible in minor details. and is brought about by climatic conditions, exigencies of expansion and mixed living, and individual tastes and lapses. But the structure stands with all its outlines permanently impressed on the life of the Musalmans. To question its existence, to ask what it is, and where it is to be found, is, to put it mildly, an intellectual self-deception. I should like to guard you against that. The Muslim Culture is here in India as in countries where the Musalmans predominate, and it is better frankly to recognize it, and see how it can be invited to help this country



to rise to the fullest growth of its political stature than to close one's eyes to it. My object tonight is to emphasize that this culture of the Musalmans is still alive, and has the vitality to promote that end.

I do not propose to make a survey of the different fields in which this culture has expressed itself in the course of history ; for that will be a mere pedantic effort, and will be wearisome to you. On the other hand, I shall invite you to feel the soul that has worked in all the branches of the Muslim life and holds together the entire body of his culture. In other words, I should like you to consider the basis on which this culture rests. If that basis is properly appreciated, I daresay, the difficulty in understanding the cultural safeguards of the Indian Muslims may be greatly minimized.

So far as I could see, the difficulty in appreciating the value of the Muslim Culture as a means of political progress for India lies in the fact that those who question it seem to be obsessed by rather indifferent notions as to what it is that really constitutes culture. In the interests of my subject, I think, I should warn you against such notions. Let me quote from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for the sake of illustration. I have select-

**Pandit Nehru's  
views  
examined.**

ed him for a very special reason. Living in the detached atmosphere of the Osmania University, I have quietly watched for years the career of many a public man in our country, and I fancy that he is one of our few men who can make or mar a great cause. There is so much of honest strength in him that it will be a matter of genuine grief if his energy especially at a time such as this when he is holding a place of great trust and influence, if his energy is victimized by any incorrect or inadequate approach to the Muslim problem in India. He says:

“I have tried hard to understand what this ‘Muslim Culture’ is, but I confess that I have not succeeded. I find a tiny handful of middle-class Muslims as well as Hindus in Northern India influenced by the Persian language and traditions. And looking to the masses, the most obvious symbols of ‘Muslim Culture’ seem to be a particular type of *pyjamas*, not too long and not too short, a particular way of shaving or clipping the moustache but allowing the beard to grow, and a *lota* with a special kind of spout, just as the corresponding Hindu customs are the wearing of *dhoti*, the possession of a topknot, and a *lota* of a different kind. As a matter of fact, even these distinctions are largely urban and they tend to disappear. The Muslim peasantry and industrial workers are hardly distinguishable from the Hindu. The Muslim intelligentsia seldom sports a beard, though Aligarh still fancies a red Turkish cap with a

fez (Turkish it is called, although Turkey will have none of it). Muslim women have taken to the *sari* and are emerging rather slowly from the *pardah*. My own tastes do not harmonize with some of those habits, and I do not fancy beards or moustaches or topknots, but I have no desire to impose my canons of taste on others, though I must confess, in regard to beards, that I rejoiced when Amanullah began to deal with them in summary fashion in Kabul."

Here in this passage you find Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru trying to seek the manifestation of the Muslim mind and soul, which alone is culture, in his fez, and *pyjamas*, and beard. Is that the line of enquiry for a serious student? Again, one may have his own prejudices. We all have a few. They are usually hindrances to right understanding. But when they are of a defiant, challenging variety, they vitiate the sense of perspective.

In the same chapter of his autobiography from which I have just quoted, Mr. Nehru notices that Turkey has discarded religion, that Persia is looking back for pre-Islamic days for her cultural inspirations and that even Egypt is going the same way and keeping her politics quite apart from religion. And so, on the strength of what he thinks to be a change in these countries, a change which, even like the Muslim culture in India, he has not been able

to understand, as I shall show later on, he proceeds to ask :

“ What of the Muslim nation and Muslim Culture ? Are they to be found in the future in Northern India rejoicing under the benign rule of the British ? ”

And he himself answers :

“ This idea of a Muslim nation is the figment of a few imagination only, and but for the publicity given to it by the press, few people would have heard of it, and even if many people believed in it, it would still vanish at the touch of reality.”

I am afraid this is rather an unkind and again an unscientific treatment of the subject. Suspicion is a dangerous instrument of argument. Very often it betrays an absence of a grasp of realities and increases misunderstanding. The desire for preserving one's own peculiarities of thought and living is a natural desire. Is it not possible to respect one's own culture and yet, through the strength of character that that culture gives, contribute to the progress and prosperity of a common body-politic ?

Let me proceed to yet another quotation, from Mr. Nehru, before I enter upon an analysis of the basis of Muslim Culture. The passage is from one of his recent writings. It will afford to you a very good example of mistaking the non-essentials for the

essentials and of the habit of refusing to see the wood for the trees.

“Nations may retain and will retain for a long time much that is peculiar to them—language, habits, ways of thought, etc.—but the machine age and science, with swift travel, constant supply of world news, radio, cinema, etc., will make them more and more uniform. No one can fight against this inevitable tendency, and only a world catastrophe which shatters modern civilization can really check it. There are certainly many differences between the traditional Hindu and Muslim philosophies of life. But these differences are hardly noticeable when both of them are compared to the modern scientific and industrial outlook on life; for, between this latter and the former two, there is a vast gulf. ~~The~~ real struggle today in India is not between Hindu Culture and Muslim Culture, but between these two and the conquering scientific culture of modern civilization. Those who are desirous of preserving ‘Muslim Culture,’ whatever that may be, need not worry about Hindu Culture, but should withstand the giant from the West. I have not doubt, personally, that all efforts, Hindu or Muslim, to oppose modern scientific and industrial civilization are doomed to failure and I shall watch this failure without regret.”

Here, Mr. Nehru makes distinction between two sets of things. One there is, he says, which is peculiar to individual nations, such as language,

habits, ways of thought and philosophies of life; and the other is that which may commonly affect one and all such as what the machine age may provide—swift travel, constant supply of world news, radio and cinema. In the opinion of Mr. Nehru, it is the latter group of things that mould the culture of a people, and it is here that he has made a fundamental lapse of judgment. He has merely confused one with the other. What he calls things peculiar to individual nations such as language, habits and ways of thought—and there are many others—which principally mark and determine the culture of one nation as distinguished from that of another. It is the ‘things peculiar’ to his own community that a Muslim is anxious to safeguard just in the same way as even great men like Mahatma Gandhi are endeavouring to preserve things peculiar to the Hindu Culture. As for the things born of the machine age, let everyone seriously put the question to himself whether he is prepared to give them the same position in life, *viz.*, the cinema, the radio and the like. Obviously these are not the things which should form the inspiring forces in any national activity. They come in when they have to, and are replaced by other amenities of life. To us they are mere impersonal forces just like electricity. No-

body can use it unless he knows how to regulate it. But a knowledge of this in itself is not the end. That itself is not a sign of civilization. On the other hand, it is the purpose for which it is used or regulated, or the spirit behind the handling of it that is a determining factor in life. You can use electricity to work for happiness and comfort, or you can put it to destructive ends, as it is being done in Europe at this moment. The aim is the thing; and it is this aim, the nature of it or the outlook on life that makes the difference between the culture of one people and that of another. You can never evolve a uniform world culture merely through the things of the science. Any uniformity that the machine can give you will only be in the externals of life, in mere superficialities. But that will not take hold of your soul, and will not denote a universal mind which alone can produce a world culture. And the universal mind is possible only when man has learnt to react from the very depths of his being to a universal spiritual or moral law of life. Says Norman Bentwich, Weizmann Professor of the International Law of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem :

“ One of the profound political troubles of our age is what while modern science has multiplied human contacts and almost destroyed the old isolation of

time and space between several nations, little progress has been made in bringing international relations under the control of the moral law. The world is politically as well as economically interdependent; what happens today between, *e.g.*, China and Japan profoundly affects the peoples and the States of Europe and America. And so long as the relations between countries are not controlled by moral principles, and the nations do not hold faithfully to their solemn compacts, they threaten to ruin the peace of the world. The religions of the peoples which alike uphold certain moral principles and share the common ideal of justice and peace, offer the best foundation for that universal moral law which must be established if civilization is to stand."

This is the truth which needs to be respected.

**Basic qualities  
of Muslim  
Culture**

You cannot build a stable nationalism in this country merely on the common things of the surface. The true seat of culture is the mind of man which manifests itself in every field of life's activity. We have to determine what it is in its different cultural manifestations, and evolve a workable plan of co-ordination between them based on the universal moral law of tolerance. Such being the pressing need of the hour, let us be clear in our minds as to what we mean by the Muslim Culture.

The Muslim Culture is neither Arabian nor Persian as Pandit Jawaharlal fancies it is. It is



neither racial nor national. It is, if I may so call it, Quranic. You may call it a religious culture if you like; but in the case of the Quranic culture there is no need for any one to fight shy of religion. The religion of the *Quran* is not a religion in the popular sense of the term. It does not thrive on mere contemplation. It is not monasticism; or asceticism : nor is it a bundle of symbolic ceremonies conducted by a hereditary priesthood. It is not merely faith or belief.

On the other hand, Islam is the name given to  
 Islam, as a certain outlook on life, and the  
 Social Creed *Ummat* or community of Islam to  
 a certain type of social order which that outlook  
 brings into being or evolves. You may talk of this  
 outlook on life, of this order of society with absolutely no reference to God, if you are so minded. But Islam will remain still Islam in its social bearing which will even then mean the path of peace, a way of life, just as Communism, Socialism, Nazism or Fascism. These several ways of living are but attempts to regulate human energy towards certain ideals or definite aims. I can conceive of persons who have a genuine dislike for religions of every description which postulate a life after death. In their case, the absence of any definite creed is itself

a creed for them. For lack of a better term people designate their attitude as materialism. One or other of these several ways, everyone follows. Sometimes, the path is prescribed for him through birth; sometimes he himself makes a selection. A student of comparative ways of living may strike the balance between one and another, and adjudicate superiority. But for a sincere follower, an active pursuit is what primarily matters. So, I fancy, is the case with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru when he says he believes in Socialism. So must it be with a Muslim when he says he believes in Islam. As a Muslim he believes in a path of life, in an order of society called Quranic or Islamic. You cannot force him to forget himself or give up his creed in matters of social relationships or politics. If by chance the creeds of the two cover some common ground or do not create a direct conflict, co-operation along certain lines is possible. But where the outlooks differ from each other in fundamentals, no amount of facile argument or sophistry, even in the name of patriotism, will be of much avail. For, patriotism will be invoked by both, and interpreted in terms of their particular creeds. That is the situation that has arisen between the Musalmans and the majority section of the people of this country. And it is surely part of statesmanship to

welcome a dispassionate analysis of the differences in outlook between the two great communities, and see on what basis true co-operation should be possible. To talk of differences honestly, I think, is the first step towards unity. It may be a paradox, but it has to be faced.

As I have pointed out already, Islam is a creed which aims to evolve and maintain a social order laying its supreme emphasis on two fundamental truths of life—one, which I may call, *movement in life*, the other, *unity in life*,—both pointing to a programme of action which goes by the name of *Shariyah*. You may as well call this *Shariyah*, an ‘Act’ of Islam. Within the framework of this Act, this programme,—its boundaries—a Muslim has to live and work. These boundaries are really not narrow, as in our present state of ignorance and decadence they appear. The march of events in the history of Islam has demonstrated time and again that to the extent the two fundamental truths of life, of movement and unity have been kept in view, to that extent has the *Shariyah* of Islam responded and supplied the vital energy to its followers. The two truths are in a sense but one, and argue but one moral or social or spiritual law of life which, if

Culture of  
movement and  
unity

I may so express, has served as a preamble to this Act, or this *Shariyah*, of Islam. That Act stands because the moral law which has inspired it is a natural law of life.

And what is this movement in life that is at  
**Dynamic** the basis of Muslim Culture ? I may  
**Culture** say at once that it is not my intention tonight to give a philosophical exposition of this idea; nor is it necessary for my immediate purpose. It may be enough if I point out to you that according to the *Quran*, life is one continuous progression. It is a linear line; and not a cycle. It is dynamic and every moment it unfolds itself in fresh glory. The idea of evolution is only a thing of yesterday in European thought and science; but among the Musalmans, it is a thing as old as the *Quran*. The influence of Greek thought as it came to the Musalmans through the Byzantine Christian channels, at first made the early thinker among them to incline to the view that life was something static, but very soon the Quranic interpretation of life asserted itself and gave such powerful volition to the intellectual life of the followers of the Faith that they were destined to lay the foundations of scientific enquiry and the spirit of research.

This is not the time to enumerate in detail the

achievements of their mind in the realms of Arts and Sciences. I may just quote a paragraph or two from *The Making of Humanity* by Briffault which will give you in general terms an idea of how important were the contributions made by the Musalmans under the impulse of this Islamic thought of movement :

“ For although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic Culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the permanent distinctive force of the modern world, and the supreme source of its victory—natural science and the scientific spirit.

“ The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries of revolutionary theories ; science owes a great deal more to Arab culture ; it owes its existence. The astronomy and mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatized in Greek culture. The Greek systematized, generalized, and theorized, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to the Greek temperament. Only in Hellenistic Alexandria was any approach to scientific work conducted in the ancient classical world. What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry, of new methods

of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs ”

The picture of the achievements of the Muslim mind in the different fields of intellectual interest may be enlarged and details filled in from their history. But it will all point to one fundamental attitude of the mind as developed by the influences of the teachings of the *Quran* ; and it was that life was one continuous urge for progress and that therefore it was part of its need to accommodate itself to the interaction of the natural forces that worked around him and through a knowledge of this interaction to harness the forces of nature to subserve to the primary aim of life which was to promote unity and solidarity among mankind.

This being so, all this talk of the Muslim Culture or the Muslim mind standing to lose its Islamic character by the onslaughts of the present scientific age, or to be side-tracked in the struggle is, I am afraid, beside the point. I may assure Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that the Muslim mind has nothing to fear from the achievements of science. In fact, the very things that seem to him to constitute the

No clash with  
modern  
civilization

present scientific culture but truly mark an extension of the Muslim Culture and even a fruition of it. There is no doubt a gap, a very great gap between the point at which the Musalman left it and the point at which he is now called upon to meet it again after centuries of forgetfulness. In their present state of undeniable depression promoted by historical forces into which we need not go at this moment, the Musalmans have become an object of light valuation. Their mind has fallen a prey to the influences of un-Islamic cultures and may seem incapable of recognizing in the progress of the West but the result of his own initial efforts. Education, however, will set matters right. There is already an awakening all over the Muslim world, and an earnest endeavour to break through the un-Islamic cob-web, that has for generations held them back from claiming their own. Turkey has taken a step forward. To casual observers not conversant with the spirit of Islam, the step it has taken may seem un-Islamic; but we who know what that spirit is are not nervous over what has happened. Persia is coming back into its own. One may fancy, it is reviving the pre-Islamic culture, but it is not so. The Quranic spirit is working in both the countries for freedom of thought and freedom of movement in

life and the same, in a more or less similar fashion, as warranted by local needs, is working for the liberation of the Muslim mind in other countries, in Egypt, Tripoli, Morocco, Syria, Arabia, Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan, where the Musalmans enjoy a homogeneous existence. And we, in India, in spite of the fact that we are dispered over a vast area and have to live in the midst of a numerically stronger non-Muslim community, we too are growing conscious of what we have to do. Not far off seems to be the day when this great belt of Islam, stretching from the Atlantic right across two great continents with its off-shoots on every side, will fall into line with the spirit of what people call the age of science. The Muslim Culture is not, therefore, of a type that will clash with any culture that science may evolve. It will certainly not fight shy of it. It has the vitality to adapt itself to the changing phase of existence. If properly utilized, it will prove an asset of incalculable value to the emancipation of life even in this country.

That is one part of the basis of the Muslim Culture. Now take the other.

You may remember that I have pointed out that unity in life is the aim of movement in life and the two go together to serve as the background to

**Culture of  
unity :**  
' Shariyah.'



all that the Muslim has to do in life. Indeed the law of unity in life is the spiritual and the moral law of Islam—a law which is at the basis of the social structure of the Muslim society to regulate which a code of action has been prescribed going by the name of *Shariyah*. My purpose is to explain to you the spiritual law of life working behind this *Shariyah*, the law of unity without which the law of movement in life will lead to chaos and disaster. The Muslim Culture therefore which embodies this law will always be found ready to welcome every achievement of science, *but it will be careful to see that that achievement subserves or advances the cause of unity in life*. Where it does not do so, you will find the Muslim mind disinclined to accept it as a factor of life. If this peculiarity of our mind is understood by those who would like to co-operate with us in the affairs of the world, there will be absolutely no difficulty in making the necessary adjustments in our daily relationships. It is the moral tone to life's activity which Islam enjoins upon its followers that could not be compromised, and where people, in the pursuit of a hunger creed, will require of them to disregard this moral aspect of life, I am sure they will never succeed.

Let us see what this moral basis is. I shall not

attempt to take up your time with any disquisition on the unity of God, which is the basic belief in Islam. I am concerned only with its implications in social matters. To us the unity of God shows itself up in the unity of mankind. Humanity in Islam is composed of individuals born with an equal spiritual status. Every human soul is made of the same fabric. That is what the *Quran* says. There is no stigma attached to any individual soul and he has not to suffer for any sin committed either by himself in a previous birth or by any of his remote ancestor. He has not to suffer for any action except his own. That is the fundamental point from which the Muslim conception of life and society starts. We are all equals in the eyes of God, and no distinction is here made between man and woman. We all form together, as the Prophet expressed, one family, *Ayal Allah*, the family of God. When the *Quran* was delivered to him, the human society all over the world was formed on a hierarchical or divisional basis, whether it was in Arabia, India or Persia or the Roman Empire. Every sanction for that basis was swept off in a moment when the Prophet came to the rescue of humanity and delivered his message of equality and intellectual and social freedom. This sense of equality between man and man is rooted in the mind of the Muslim ;

and I may suggest to every critic that the sense is neither Arabian in origin nor Persian in character, much less is it Indian. And wherever you see the Musalmans meet together, whether in a mosque five times a day, or at the seat of their Ka'ba once a year, there you find the culture of the Musalmans. This sense of equality, this standing shoulder to shoulder without regard for colour or race or station in life, this standing and kneeling and sitting together in a common worship before one common Master of the Universe using one common language of devotion, expressing one common wish, this sense of equality or its manifestation is the culture of the Musalmans. And it is to be found in India, as in every part of the globe where two Muslims meet.

What is the life of a Muslim from birth to death, even in this age of the machine? What are the cultural landmarks through which he has to pass, no matter how he reacts to them individually? That is one line of approach to his mind, one sure way of understanding his culture.

The moment a baby is born in a Muslim family, a voice catches his ears. That is his baptism. He is not baptized by water; but by the spirit of his own nature. This voice is usually the voice of the

**Cultural landmarks in Muslim life**

parent or of some elderly member of the family. It delivers him a message, the message of his own nature. "God alone is great. He alone is great; and there is none beside Him worthy of worship, even as His Messenger, Muhammad, says." It is a message of freedom, of the dignity of man. The voice proceeds: "Hie to the path of progress: hie to the path of devotion." And it repeats itself, pointing to his mission in life and showing him the line along which he should devote all his faculties to the service of the highest. And then the voice closes with the self-same note with which it began. "God alone is great: He alone is great: and there is none beside Him worthy of worship."

This little simple ceremony performed over a new-born baby, unconscious still of anything around him, is mightily symbolical of the Muslim Culture that he will be called upon to respect and follow, the culture of freedom and unity in life. The brief call which marks this ceremony at his birth does not die away with it, but haunts him right through his life. In the morning when he wakes up from sleep, or in the night, before he lays himself down for rest, he listens to the same call, as three other times during the day—the call of the *Muezzin* from the minaret. And the note rings in his ears each time

reminding him of the voice that was at first poured into them at the time of his birth—the call for progress and devotion to God. Indeed, such is the spiritual character of this culture that when his life's task on earth is done, and his family and friends gather around him to bid him farewell, the same call passes over his body and the gathering stand in a line, shoulder to shoulder, to pronounce blessing. The call is the self-same call for progress and devotion to God even after death, death which in Islam is the name given to the opening of a new chapter of life in a higher and different sphere. Mark ! even in death does he symbolize his culture through the posture he assumes in the grave. Here he lies neither embalmed nor protected in a safe coffin. Earth hugging to earth, within the space measured out equally to every other Muslim in the world, with his head turned to one common centre, he lies. That is his Culture. He lies there wrapt in a simple dress, just two sheets of cloth, the dress which he used to put on whenever he appeared in the company of his comrades on the plain of Arafat, at Mecca, to pay homage to one common ideal in life. That dress is the symbol of his culture; not the fez, nor the *pyjamas*, nor any other which he may put on or take away as may suit

the promptings of the hour or the demands of climate.

And between these two landmarks in the life of a Muslim—his birth and his death, there are other landmarks he has to cross and which I have no time here to explain; but between these two, all that he is expected to do is laid down either in specific terms or in broad outline in his Holy Book, the contents of which, in one form or another, are from his infancy onward always kept before him. These directions, informed by the life of the Prophet, ccompose the *Shariyah* of the Musalmans. For a general grasp of its character, it may be said that, *in the first place*, it regulates the form of Muslim worship, *in the second place*, it lays down the duties to be discharged by every member of the Faith towards every other, whether within the family or outside of it and the duties to be discharged by them towards the non-Muslims who may compose their body-politic, and the duties to be discharged by the State towards one and all, and, *lastly*, it lays down a compulsory programme of economic self-sufficiency allowing an equitable share in inheritance to every heir, male or female, and levying certain charges on the wealth of the rich for the uplift of the poor, and the upkeep in particular

of the widow and the orphan and the old and the weak. These are the main directions in which this *Shariyah* interests itself, although in spheres not covered by these, such as matters of cleanliness, food, drink, dress, and social etiquette, it also offers its guidance.

The aim of this body of directions, this *Shariyah*, was originally to evolve a society that should display in its activity a harmonious interaction of the material and the moral forces of life. Hence it was that, whereas it allowed free scope for the exercise of initiative in material pursuits of every description, it laid restrictions and prohibitions to prevent such enterprises from developing into exploitation of the moral or the material welfare of every other member of the society. It therefore lays its emphasis on the duties to be discharged towards others, rather than on any rights to be claimed without reference to these duties. Differences of interpretation of certain provisions of this law have given rise to several schools of thought among the Musalmans; but these in their essentials vary but little with one another.

This *Shariyah* or the law of Islam is the cultural expression of the Muslim mind, and is still a living force in his life in India, as everywhere else,

because it is intended to govern his day-to-day activity. The history of Islam has shown that so long as the Muslim mind was inspired by the law of movement and unity that we have been speaking of, did this *Shariyah* react to meet new situations, and vitalize the life of the Musalmans to further the cause of civilization. And whenever the spirit of movement asserted itself, there was what is called an *Ijtihad*. Unfortunately, the spirit of *Ijtihad* has been taking rest among us for several centuries, keeping Muslim life out of tune with advancing time. It will serve no useful purpose to look back over these centuries of depression and neglect of Islam and cry over the causes that have brought about the result. The *Shariyah* of Islam has reached us of this generation in a more or less static form, and at a time when we have no central organization of our own to exercise the powers vested in its code to regulate our daily life throughout the country. Needless to say that the culture of the Musalmans, as *Shariyah* can manifest, is being misunderstood and even denied. But may I point out that even in its present form, it has not lost those peculiarities of which will be a source of perennial reminder to the Musalmans of their solidarity and the moral basis on which their social structure rests. Their form of worship which is the



greatest binding factor stands today even as it was fixed in the time of the Prophet. The Mosque is still set in the same direction, and the call that proceeds from its minaret is the same great old call that moved the Musalmans to such wonderful activity in the past. The same standard of morality in sex relationships, and in the daily transactions of life persists, in spite of lapses, till this day. Above all, the *Quran* lives, and is making its message of movement and unity, of freedom and equality, now heard in every home through its translations.

Thus the qualities which should distinguish the  
New Muslim Culture are all there. Only  
awakening the material accompaniments need  
toning up. The events of the last few decades have, however, roused the entire Muslim world in a consciousness of their present state of depression in material life. There are signs—and powerful signs—of a revival among the Musalmans everywhere, as even in this country. It is an awakening such as usually comes to fallen nations who have had a great past. The non-Muslim community everywhere will be called upon hereafter to deal not with a decaying society such as it was the misfortune of Islam to call its own during the last few generations, but with a rising generation, who, conscious of

the condition in which they have been left through a neglect of their Faith, or an incorrect approach to it, will now move forward to retrieve their position, and not merely claim the heritage of their past culture but revive the vitality inherent in its creed. What form this revival will take will be determined by the freedom of action they will enjoy. Wherever they predominate or live a homogeneous existence, their task is clear. They will have to rise or fall by themselves. But where, as in India, they are obliged to live a triangular life, they will have to effect a compromise. The fusion of cultures is an idle thought. A federation of cultures seems to be the only sensible solution here. And towards that end their efforts should be directed. This is not the time when their leaders should insist on the little dying things of the day. They have now to concentrate all their energy on the larger issues of their cultural future in India, and, in particular, the revival of that side of the *Shariyah*, through the misunderstanding and neglect of whose intellectual and economic provisions, they owe so much of their present condition. Their children will need hereafter to be economically self-dependent, and intellectually and politically immune from exploitation.

The economic programme of the *Shariyah* has

Islam's  
economic  
programme

fallen into neglect very largely because there has been in our recent history too much facility afforded to indulge in lapses. Now that things are improving for every one in this country and its people are to have a control of their own affairs in the international reorganization of their economic life, it becomes imperative on the part of every well-wisher of the Musalmans of this country to see that a community which, in spite of the shocks of time, has continued to live for a great social ideal in life does not fall a prey to any undiluted hunger creed, but satisfies its hunger by first reorganizing its own domestic economic resources on the moral lines laid down by the *Shariyah*, through the machinery of the state. For, if the Musalman is to call the coming state his own, in precisely the same manner as any other member of the body-politic is entitled to, he must have the opportunity and the power to operate his personal law on himself. What form such a machinery will have to assume is a matter of detail. The non-Muslim sections of the people should have no reason to see in such a scheme the bogy of an *imperium in imperio*. The functioning of the personal law by the state among the different communities in India is not a new thing in this country, and should not appear a new thing if the work

is better done. In the interests of economic self-sufficiency and without being a burden in any serious manner on the exchequer of the state, it should be within the rights of the Musalman to ask for a state organization to control and administer the Muslim endowments, collect and distribute the *Zakat* and other charges on the surplus wealth of the Musalmans, and to administer the law of inheritance and marriage in strict accordance with the *original spirit* of the *Shariyah*.

I have drawn special attention to the economic  
Spiritual life needs of the Musalmans not because  
and moral that a satisfaction of them is an end  
standards in itself, but because the *Shariyah*  
of Islam lays an equal emphasis on the material  
interests of life, in order that there might be a  
natural and happy blending of the spiritual and the  
material in our daily activity. The safeguarding of  
the spiritual side is commonly understood to be a  
purely individual or private concern. This may be  
true of societies where spiritual development is not  
a matter for corporate endeavour. In Islam, indi-  
vidual spiritual progress is undoubtedly an aim of  
life, as in every other religion; but the peculiarity  
in Islam is this that every such individual progress  
should react on the general spiritual uplift of the

*Ummat*, adding momentum to the spirit of unity and solidarity among the members of the Faith and the humanity at large. That is the primary reason why the Musalmans have always been careful to have the necessary freedom for their daily congregational worship in a free atmosphere. This congregational worship is a great cultural force among us, and will have naturally to form one of the primary items of our safeguards. So also the moral standard of our social life under the *Shariyah* will have to be respected in every piece of general legislation that may be enacted in this country in future.

Such in character are the cultural safeguards which the Musalmans are anxious to assure for themselves in the new political life that has opened before them in India. Our non-Muslim compatriots will do well to appreciate the Muslim standpoint and march forward with their hearty co-operation. It will serve no purpose to imagine that there is little difference between the culture of the Musalmans and that of the majority community. There are undoubtedly a great many things of superficial nature which are common to both, but they are mostly the products of a common climate and of a common market life. They are not such as to promote a synthesis of

Cultural  
identity

social life at home ; they do not touch the soul or bind the mind to one common moral outlook on life or create a common feeling of sacred devotion to one another on terms of equality. I do not wish to analyse the culture of other people to bring this fact home to you. It may be unfortunate that there should be any fundamental difference in the basic character of two cultures. Time may bring about some sort of uniformity at the foundation ; but while the difference lasts, who can say that the Muslim Culture does not need or should not need safeguarding, especially when that culture thrives on a universal spiritual law of life working for the unity of the human race rather than its disintegration ? And history has shown how even noble cultures expressing the lives of minorities have been submerged by other cultures either by force of arms or by the militant voice of the majority, even in democratic countries. Such a prospect, the Musalman in India is anxious to avoid while he can.

Hence it is that he wishes to have an effective  
**Uniform** share in the control of the state  
**Uplift** machinery, and an adequate share in  
the wealth of the country. For what progress is  
that which does not give him, on the one hand, the

necessary strength to protect himself and all that he culturally holds dear against the whims of time, and, on the other, the means and resources to contribute to the general progress of the country. Handicapped as he is as an essentially landless class in most of the provinces, with meagre share in the industrial and commercial life of the country, and still educationally backward, and living always in the grip of the money-lender, an unqualified economic programme such as is recommended at this moment of mass uplift may not mean much to him. *He needs an extra attention, if such an uplift is to be really uniform.* That will be the test of nationalism or political partnership, if it is to grow and last. You cannot let a sweet slogan sweep across our country like a tornado only to weed out the weak. Let us pray and hope that wise counsels will prevail everywhere and a happy solution found ; for, on that, I should think, will depend the future of India. If our compatriots should rise equal to the occasion and talk less of communalism, they will find that there is no section of the people better equipped morally and spiritually than the Musalmans to shoulder the responsibilities of an onward march to secure for India an honourable station in the world.

Apart from the cultural safeguards of the

**Problem of Urdu**      *Shariyah* there is another culture-field in which the Musalman in India is equally anxious to assure for himself in the new dispensation the necessary security. And that is the intellectual field in which he would like to see no barriers placed in the natural development of the language which he has helped to evolve to serve not merely as a vehicle of his cultural expression, and as a factor of unity among the Musalmans themselves, but as a means of establishing living connections with the other sections of the Indian population. This is a great question in itself, as the field in which a language is at play touches every other field of culture, and, for that reason, will need a special treatment of its own. At some future date, I may likely deal with it in some detail. But at this moment, I feel impelled to strike a note of warning against the tendency noticed even among some of my own literary friends to call the Urdu language by the hazy name of Hindustani or even Hindi-Hindustani just for the sake of a compromise with mere politicians. I think that such an attitude is neither intellectual nor straightforward. I see no reason to call it by any other except its proper name, Urdu. That is the name given to it by its parents, and we have no right to change it. One of the heirs to the heritage may disown it, and



go his way. But why should the other follow suit? There should be no doubt a feeling of regret in the mind of the Musalman that his fellow countrymen should so seriously endeavour, as they are doing today, to dissolve a great bond of unity between their great cultures, and to strike out a new path for themselves. Truly, there was no need for it. The Urdu language being a manifestation of the genius of both the Hindus and the Musalmans is now strong enough to sustain the cultural thought of both the sections. It is sweet enough for every tongue. But our friends are not in a listening mood. They do not realize that new languages are not made that way, and that the natural laws of life are more potent than political slogans. The Musalman is therefore not perturbed at their defection; but at something more serious. He fears that in their zeal to create an artificial language entirely alien to him in texture and spirit and to swamp the whole country with it, they will place impediments in the further development of the Urdu language. It is against this contingency that he is anxious to protect the Urdu language. He has already tried to argue with them that their venture to create a new language to serve as a *lingua franca* and to replace or supplant Urdu which in a large measure was serving this purpose,

that this new venture was rank communalism on the part of the majority and was inimical to the interests of nationalism in India. The reply, however, comes—and I am quoting Pandit Jawaharlal himself—“The communalism of the majority is more akin to nationalism than the communalism of the minority.” Such is the subconscious that is at work in our public life now-a-days, in the name of nationalism ! You really cannot argue after that. My sincere opinion is that the Musalman should not worry himself over what others are doing to foist an artificial tongue into the country. Like every other artificial tongue it will go the way its predecessors have gone. But he must continue to give to Urdu the best that there is in him to let it advance on its natural lines. But let him keep the door open. That is the only language which will one day bind India together. There is no other to take its place. So let him keep the door open and keep the house comfortable. The prodigal will, I am sure, return one day and claim his own. But let not Musalman follow his way and turn a reactionary himself. Indeed, I should believe that the Musalmans cannot afford to do it at this stage. A vast majority of them know no other language. It is through this language only that they have for several generations carried on their intellectual

activity, whatever that has been. It has now become the mother tongue of a vast majority of them, and is for that reason very dearly cherished. It has already developed a capacity to sustain the Muslim thought as has been transmitted to them by their past, and bids well to sustain the thought that will govern their mind in the days of the renaissance that he is looking forward to in the near future. To the extent he has poured his soul into its frame, to the extent he has transmitted his vitality to it, to that extent he will continue to claim it as an expression of his culture *as well* and will therefore naturally be desirous of not merely safeguarding its interests but continuing to make it a plank on which a community of fellow-feeling and mutual care and regard should thrive between himself and his fellow countrymen to the lasting good of our country.

Friends! I have done. I have to thank you for the very indulgent and patient hearing that you have given me to-night. I shall be happy if in my analysis of the basis of the Muslim Culture, I have succeeded, in ever so small a measure, in impressing upon you that this culture of the Musalmans is not a culture merely of the tailoring house, or of the drawing

Conclusion

room or of the music hall, or a culture divided against itself, but is intrinsically and in its operations a culture of movement and unity in life, and is still powerfully at work in our midst at the present hour. Such being its fundamental character, can it ever be antagonistic to any healthy nationalism or internationalism or any ideal worthy of man ?

### 3

#### THE CONCEPT OF SOCIETY IN ISLAM

Years ago, an English poet, Matthew Arnold, wrote a few lines entitled "Revolutions," lines, full of pathos and wistfulness :

"Before man parted for this earthly strand,  
While yet upon the verge of heaven he stood,  
God put a heap of letters in his hand  
And bade him make with them what word he could.

And man has turned them many times : made Greece,  
Rome, England, France :—Yes, nor in vain essayed  
Way after way, changes that never cease !  
The letters have combined : something was made."

Indeed, something was made ; but the poet, in sorrow, exclaims :

"Ah ! an inextinguishable sense  
Haunts him that he has not made what he should  
That he has still, though old, to recommence,  
Since he has not yet found the word God would !

And empire after empire, at their height  
Of sway, have felt this boding sense come on ;  
Have felt their huge frames not constructed right,  
And dropped, and slowly died upon their throne."

Such is the recollection of the story of man

that comes to the mind of Arnold! But he thinks only of Europe. The new words that man has coined since, even in Europe, and which seem to hold its peoples under their spell at the present day, he had no opportunity to read. One wonders what note he would have struck in his lines had the new words obtained currency in his own life-time.

Matthew Arnold could easily have taken a broader survey of human history, and thrown his glance beyond the confines of his own continent, and ascertained if man anywhere else had "found the word God would." But he did not. Hence his disappointment. One thing, however, he incidentally emphasizes. And it is this. No word that man can make without an insight into the composition of 'the word that God would' has any chance of success in bringing true happiness to him. In other words, no society can hold sufficiently long unless it satisfies some spiritual law of life. The cry for the kingdom of heaven to come and dwell on earth, and for God's will to reign therein, as it does in heaven, is only a reaction of the human spirit against the absence or neglect of any such law governing man's individual life and his relation with the external world.

Not that such a law is not discernible to man

Religion of  
Nature

or is unknown to him, It is innate,  
says the Quran :

فأقم وجهك للدين حنيفاً - فطرت الله التي فطر الناس عليها لا  
تبديل لخلق الله - ذالك الدين القيم - ولكن اكثر الناس لا يعلمون -

" Turn steadfastly to the right way—the Way of  
Allah—for which man by nature is fitted. There is  
no altering of the way of Allah. That is the straight  
way. But most people know it not. (30 : 29 )

The *Quran* repeatedly draws attention to the  
indifference of man to see the things which he can  
clearly see for himself and reflect. The vast pano-  
rama of Nature, the beautiful constellations moving  
in the heavens, giving to earth its alternation of day  
and night, its light and darkness, the soaring clouds  
that send down rain from the sky to water the  
earth, the tiny seed that man sows therein shooting  
out a luxuriant crop affording him his subsistence,  
the moist germ out of which he himself grows into  
being, and has help-meets who give him the com-  
fort that he so much values and a host of similar  
objects must seem to him that some benevolent law  
or purpose holds together all that he sees or feels  
through his senses, and instinctively raise from him  
the exclamation :

ربنا ما خلقت هذا باطلاً

"Our Lord, all this, Thou hast not created in  
vain." (3 : 190.)

و ما خلقنا السموات و الارض و ما بينهما لعين ما خلقتهما الا  
بالحق ولكن اكثر الناس لا يعلمون -

“ We have not created the heavens and the earth  
and whatsoever is between them in sport : We have  
not created them except to bear the *truth* but most  
people know it not.” (44 : 38.)

الم تر ان الله يولج ليل في النهار و يولج النهار في الليل و سخر  
الشمس والقمر كل يجري الى اجل مسمى -

“ Hast thou not seen how Allah causeth the night  
to pass into the day and causeth the day to pass into  
the night, and hath bound the sun and the moon to  
run, each its course, for an appointed term? ”  
(31 : 29.)

و هو الذى جعل لكم النجوم لتهتدوا بها فى ظلمات البر و البحر  
و قد فصلنا الايت لقوم يعلمون -

“ And He it is Who hath set for you the stars that  
ye may guide your course by them in the darkness of  
the land and the sea. Clear have We made Our signs  
to those who have insight.” (6 : 98.)

و لقد خلقنا لانسان من سلاله من طين - ثم جعلناه نطفه فى قرار  
مكين - ثم خلقنا النطفه علقه فخلقنا العلقه مغعة فخلقنا مضغة عظما  
فكسرنا العظم لحما - ثم انشأناه خلقا اخر - فتبرك الله احسن الخالقين -

“ Verily We created man from an extract of  
earth ;

“ Then placed him as a life-drop in a safe lodging  
(womb) ;

“ Then fashioned We the drop a clot, then fashion-  
ed We the clot a little lump, then fashioned We the



little lump bones, then clothed the bones with flesh and then produced him as yet another creation. So blessed be Allah, the best of Creators ! ” (23 : 12-14.)

و من اياته ان خلق لكم من انفسكم ازواجاً لتسكنوا اليها وجعل بينكم مودة و رحمة ان في ذلك لايت لقوم يتفكرون - و من اياته خلق السموات و الارض و اختلاف السنتكم و اللوانكم ان في ذلك لايت للعلمين -

و من اياته منامكم بالليل والنهار وابتغواكم من فضله ان في ذلك لايت لقوم يسمعون -

و من اياته يريكم البرق خوفاً و طمعا و ينزل من السماء ماء فيحيى به الارض بعد موتها - ان في ذلك لايت لقوم يعقلون -

“ And of His signs is this : He hath created for you help-meets from yourselves that ye may find comfort in them, and provided affection and sympathy between you. Herein indeed are portents for folk who reflect.

“ And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and your variety of language and colour. Herein indeed are portents for men of knowledge.

“ And of His signs is your slumber by night and by day, and your seeking of His bounty. Herein indeed are portents for folk who heed.

“ And of His signs is this : He showeth you the lightning for fear and hope, and sendeth down water from the sky, and thereby reviveth the earth after her

death. Herein indeed are portents for folk who understand." (30 : 21-24 )

تبارك الذى خلق سبع سموات طباقاً - ما ترى فى خلق الرحمن  
من تفوت فارجع البصر هل ترى من فطور - ثم ارجع البصر كرتين  
ينقلب اليك لبصر خاسئاً و هو حسير -

"(Blessed is He) Who hath created the seven heavens in layers. Thou canst see no disharmony in the handiwork of the Beneficent God. Then look again. Dost thou see any rifts ?

"Then look again and yet again, thy sight will return unto thee thwarted and tired." (67 : 3-4.)

The Quran clinches the argument by a direct appeal to look within: "There are signs even in your own selves; will you not then take note of them ? (51 : 21).

(و فى انفسكم (آيات) افلا تبصرون)

It does not suggest that God merely "put a  
The reflex      heap of letters into man's hand  
process      when he parted for this earthly  
strand, and bade him to make with them what  
word he could." *The reflex process is what is revealed by the Quran.* The 'word'<sup>1</sup> itself was shown to him and its meaning explained and, lest he might forget its structure and composition, was trans-fixed in his nature, bidding him to preserve it therein, and not play with its letters, and dis-

1. Cf. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"—St. John, 1 : i.

turb their arrangement, so that he might live in peace with himself and the external world of relations.

و اذا قال ربك الملائكة انى جاعل فى الارض خليفة - قالوا اتجعل فيها من يفسد فيها و يسفك الدماء - و نحن نسبح بحمدك و نقدر لك - قال انى اعلم ما لا تعلمون -  
و علم ادم الاسماء كلها ثم عرضهم على الملائكة فقال انبؤنى باسماء هؤلاء ان كنتم صادقين -

قالوا سبحتك لا علم لنا الا ما علمتنا انك انت العليم الحكيم قال يا ادم انبئهم باسمائهم فلما انباءهم باسماءهم قال الم اقل لكم انى اعلم غيب السموات و الارض -

“ And when thy Lord said unto the angels : Lo ! I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth, they said : Wilt Thou place therein one who will do mischief and shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and extol Thy holiness ? He said : Surely, I know that which ye know not.

“ *And He taught Adam all the names*, then showed the objects to the angels, saying : Inform Me of the names of these, if ye are in the right.

“ They said : Glorious art Thou ! We have no knowledge saving that which Thou hast taught us. Surely, Thou alone art the Knower, the Wise.

“ He said : O Adam ! Inform them of their names, and when he had informed them of their names, He said : Did I not tell you that I knew the secrets of the heavens and the earth ? ” (2 : 30-33)

Thus rendered conscious of the secrets of the heavens and of the earth, the 'names,' or the meaning of things, or the laws of their existence, it followed as a corollary that he should affirm the unity of existence.

و اذ اخذ ربك من بنى ادم من ظهورهم ذريتهم و اشهدهم  
على انفسهم الست بربكم - قالوا بلى -

"And when thy Lord took out from the loins of Adam's children their progeny, and made them affirm, (saying): Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea, we affirm." (7 : 172.)

So equipped, man's nature found itself agreeable to bear the trust of vicegerency.

انا عرضنا للامانة على السموات و الارض و الجبال فابين  
ان يحملنها و اشفقن منها و حملها الانسان -

"Verily We proposed to the heavens and to the earth and to the mountains to receive the trust, but they shrank from receiving it, and were afraid of it. Man alone undertook to bear it." (33 : 72.)

And to help him bear this trust, a sense of balance was set in him to keep the letters that make the 'word' in proper position, and he was told that he would be judged accordingly.

الله الذى انزل لكتب بالحق و الميزان -

"Allah it is Who hath revealed the word with truth and the Balance." (42 : 17.)

الرحمن - علم القرآن - خلق الانسان - علمه البيان -  
 الشمس والقمر بحسبان - والنجم والشجر يسجدان - و السماء رفعها  
 ووضع الميزان - الا نطفوا في الميزان - و اقيموا الوزن بالقسط  
 ولا تخسروا الميزان -

“ The Beneficent God  
 Hath revealed the Word ;  
 Hath created man ;  
 Hath given him articulate speech.  
 The Sun and the Moon follow a System.  
 And the plants and the trees bend in adoration,  
 And the sky, He hath reared it on high,  
 And *hath set the balance* ;  
 That in the balance ye should not transgress,  
 But weigh with fairness and not scant the bal-  
 ance.” (55 : 1-9.)

It is in such figurative language that the Holy Book of Islam points out that the heavens and the earth and whatsoever is between them are not created in sport, but for a serious end, that each object of creation is made subject to the laws intrinsic in its nature in order that it might fulfil its function, and that man fitted by nature with a sense of balance and discrimination is to conduct himself in accordance with the laws of his being. and in harmony with the laws governing the rest of creation. “ That is the straight way,” says the *Quran*, the word of God ‘set in the nature of man’ ; but man

“hath proved unjust, indifferent,”<sup>1</sup> and “hath corrupted the world.”

Hence this law of life had to be revealed to him by word of mouth, to put him in mind thereof from time to time; and that was done by a succession of great men whom the *Quran* calls *Mursalin* or Messengers, men inspired to deliver the Divine message, to give utterance to the law set in the nature of man, and called upon at the same time to live it in their own lives for the sake of example. Their mission was to restore the ‘balance’ disturbed by the self-will and perversity of man help him to live a united and harmonious life.

وما كان الناس الا امة واحدة فاختلّفوا -

“Mankind were but one community; then they differed.” (10 : 19.)

كان الناس امة واحدة - فبعث الله النبيين مبشرين و منزيين و انزل معهم الكتاب بالحق ليحكم بين الناس فيما اختلفوا فيه -

“Mankind were one community, and (when they differed) Allah sent Prophets as Comforters and Warners, and revealed the word of truth to judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed.” (2 : 213.)

قد دخلت من قبلكم ستن فسيروا في الارض فانظروا كيف كان عاقبة المكذّبين -

“Systems have passed away before you. Do but travel in the land and see the nature of the consequences for those who rejected (the Messengers).” (3 : 136.)

انا ارسلتك بالحق بشيرا و نذيرا و ان من امة الا خلافها  
نذير -

“Verily We have sent thee with the Truth, a Comforter and Warner ; and there is not a nation but a Warner hath passed among them.” (35 : 24.)

وكم ارسلنا من نبي في الاولين - و ما ياتيهم من نبي الا كانوا  
به يستهزؤن -

“How many a Prophet did We send among the men of old !

“And never came there unto them a Prophet but they used to mock him !” (43 : 6-7.)

و رسلا قد قصصنهم عليك من قبل و رسلا لم نقصصهم عليك -

“Verily We sent messengers before thee, of some of whom We have told thee, and of some of whom We have not told thee.” (40 : 17.)

شرع لكم من الدين ما وصى به نوحاً و الذى اوحينا اليك  
وما وصينا به ابراهيم و موسى و عيسى ان اقيموا الدين و لا تتفرقوا  
فيه -

“He hath ordained for you that religion which He commended unto Noah, and which We inspire in thee (Muhammad), and which We commended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: Establish the religion, and be not divided therein.” (42 : 13.)

يا ايها الرسل) و ان هذه امتكم آمة واحدة و انا ربكم فانقون -

“ (O Messengers !) Ye all are of but one Order,  
and I am your Lord. So be mindful of Me ! ”  
(23 : 52.)

The *Quran* thus makes it clear that the religion which the Prophet of Arabia preached to his people calling on them to carry it to the lengths of the earth and proclaim the supreme unity of God working benevolently in all creation, and promote unity among mankind is not a new religion. It is the same as is implanted in Nature, the same as was revealed to every Prophet in every nation and is eternal in its operation. The *Quran* hails Muhammad (peace on him!) as the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers or the last of the bearers of the truth of Divine Unity, as it was through him that the final emphasis was given to the doctrine and expressed in comprehensive fulness leaving no possibility of further augmentation to its import. The *Quran* also styles him as a “blessing to all the worlds,” as his appearance was made at a time when mankind was torn by anarchy of thought and feeling, and the cause of civilization had well-nigh been submerged under the dead weight of Ignorance.

History will bear out the truth of these distinc-



**Divine unity,  
basis of Islamic  
society**

tive appellations by shewing that this great doctrine of Islam has ever since the time of the Prophet so powerfully impinged itself on the religious thought of the followers of other faiths that no reorientation of them has been possible except in terms of the truth to which the Prophet devoted his life in the teeth of bitter opposition and which he has left behind as a permanent bequest to all mankind.<sup>4</sup> The Rev. C.F. Andrews, one of the foremost missionaries of the present day, observes in a recent contribution, *The Function of Islam* :

“ One of the greatest blessings which Islam has brought to East and West alike has been the emphasis which at a critical period in human history it placed upon the Divine Unity. For during those Dark Ages both in East and West, from 600 to 1000 A.D. this doctrine was in danger of being overlaid and obscured in Hinduism and in Christianity itself, owing to the immense accretions of subsidiary worships of countless demi-gods and heroes. Islam has been, both to Europe and to India, in their darkest hour of aberration from the sovereign truth of God's Unity, an invaluable corrective and deterrent. *Indeed, without the final emphasis on this truth, which Islam gave from its central position,—facing India and facing Europe,—it is doubtful whether this idea of God as one could have obtained that established place in human thought*

*which is uncontested in the intellectual world today .”<sup>1</sup>*

This doctrine of the Unity of God as delineated by Muhammad (peace on him !) the final bearer of the great message to mankind is the foundation on which the *Ummat* or the Society of Islam rests. It is a simple creed. ‘There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger !’ Any one who gives adherence to it straightway enters the fold and becomes a member of a brotherhood where colour or blood or circumstance or station in life does not count, where uprightness of character and conduct is the only criterion of preference, where one should discharge his duty to others and could claim no right without reference to it, and where to live such a life is to offer true prayer to God.

The *Quran*, therefore, calls the *Ummat* of Islam as *Khaira Ummatin*, ‘The best society,’ every member of which has to live resigned to or in accordance with the will of God or His law or, to use the phrase already employed, ‘the balance set in the nature of man,’ revealed and explained in the *Quran*. The law of God is not a harsh law, nor His will is the will of a tyrant.

يريد الله بكم اليسر ولا يريد بكم العسر -

“Allah desireth for you ease ; He desireth not hardship for you.” (2 : 185.)

1. *The Genuine Islam*, Singapore. Vol. 1 : No. 8 (1936).

لا يكلف الله نفساً الا وسعها -

“ On no Soul doth Allah lay a responsibility greater than it can bear.” (2 : 26)

It is the religion that helps man to live in peace with himself, and in peace with his fellows and the rest of creation. ‘Islam’ itself means ‘Peace,’ realized in the devotion of all our faculties to the will of God which is nothing but the law of life devised in His infinite goodness to work for harmony and thus to demonstrate the Unity of existence. The duty of every Muslim is to see that every little act of his conforms to this law of peace and harmony.

The *Quran* calls upon him to say :

ان صلاتى و نسكى و معيائى و مماتى لله رب العالمين -

“ Verily my prayers and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah.”

Life thus viewed, every action of man assumes a spiritual significance.

A Positivist, follower of Comte, Dr. J.H. Bridges, in an address delivered in 1879 on the subject of ‘Prayer and Work,’ observes :<sup>1</sup>

“ The faith of the Mussalman is concentrated in a single word, Islam ; devotion, resignation of our own

1. *Discourses on Positive Religion*, 1891, London.

will to the supreme decree. That word was not limited by Muhammad to his own followers ; it was used ungrudgingly of his Judaic and Christian predecessors. *There is no fitter word for the religion of the human race.* If there is any one word in Western language which can translate it fully, it is the word religion itself ; and that word needs interpretation for ears untrained in Latin speech. The word Islam unfolds itself for us, as for the followers of Muhammad, into the two great and inseparable aspects of life—prayer and work. *Pray and give alms*, said Muhammad, almsgiving in his wide interpretation of it, conceived with admirable wisdom relatively to the simple wants of his time, covering the whole field of doing good to men. Pray and work, said the mediaeval saint ; pray as though nothing were to be done by work : work as though nothing were to be gained by prayer.

“In different ways and under every possible variety of language and symbol, the same thing is said by every spiritual leader of men in every age and country. I find it in Confucius, the founder of the faith that has kept Chinese society together for five-and-twenty centuries : I find it in the ancient theocracy of Hindustan : I find it in the monuments of Egypt as their secrets are gradually revealing themselves to modern learning. I read it in the premature effort of Pythagoras, premature, yet profoundly fruitful of momentous result, to discipline of life upon a human basis. And last of all I find it where most men think a monopoly of such knowledge is to be found, in the Hebrew and Christian Bible.

“Islam, then, or in the English tongue, devotion—the devotion of our life to the highest; the bringing of our own will into accord with the supreme will; this is the word that sums up the lives of pious men in every age and every country. They have framed for themselves an ideal, a model, a pattern of what their life should be. They have done their utmost to make that ideal a reality. In other words, they have prayed and they have worked.”

What then is devotion of life to the highest? In other words what is the function of man on earth as specified by the Holy *Quran*?

Function of  
Man

This function is two-fold. It consists, in the first place, of faith or belief, and, in the second, of work in consonance therewith. It is not merely ‘pray and work’ that is enjoined on a Muslim as Dr. Bridges observes. On the other hand, it is ‘believe and work.’ Prayer in Islam is more an action of the spirit, and is covered by the term ‘work.’

The faith of a Muslim is focussed in the idea of the Unity of God to which reference has already been made. ‘Since, it is God who is the source of all power and knowledge, nothing moves or happens, whether one calls it good or evil according to one’s sense of values without His knowledge and permission. A belief in such Divine dispensation, always

benevolent in purpose has become imperative. As the physical or material Universe, the world seen, is not evidently the whole of the manifestation of His power and will, a belief in the unseen world peopled by unseen forces, some of whom the *Quran* calls *Malayik* or angels obeying the laws of their own existence and reacting on the world of humanity in pursuance of the United purpose innate in the Unity of God's existence, a belief in them naturally arises. Since 'man's vision cannot comprehend him,' and God has not chosen to appear before man in Visible Reality, His wish can only be transmitted or revealed through the medium of man himself whom man can understand. A belief in such chosen men, the messengers, as also a belief in the text of the messages inspired in them or the Books, have necessarily to be entertained. Finally, a Muslim has to believe in a life after death, a new life in which man will move grown conscious of the reaction in his soul wrought by the manner of life he had lived on earth, in accordance with or in disregard of the law or will of God as explained in the Books.

These six beliefs which constitute the faith of a Muslim are simple enough to make their appeal to the commonsense of man if, according to the *Quran*, one can but reflect on the multitude of signs which

the visible Universe and the common experiences of life itself furnish. At the same time, these beliefs are so naturally linked, one to the other, and revolve round the central belief of the Unity of God, a belief "uncontested" in the intellectual world today," that they can easily enlist logic, and the achievements of modern science to bringing home their truths even to the sceptically disposed.

Our immediate purpose in referring to the subject of beliefs is to understand their significance in so far as they affect man as a social being, or unit of society.

The primary question with which we have to start is : What position does Islam assign to man in the scheme of Divine Creation ? Does it fit him to translate these beliefs held up for his acceptance into action ? The *Quran* does not relegate him to a position of inferiority to any object of creation. He is not inferior in stature in the scale of Divine values to the sun or the moon or other constellations in the heavens which have formed the objects of worship from a distance in the history of man, or to trees or cattle or fire or water or stones at close range, or again to that body of invisible forces called angels. The *Quran* points out that

Man's place in  
creation

man is made "of the goodliest fabric,"<sup>1</sup> he whom the "angels were made to offer obeisance,"<sup>2</sup> and for whom "whatsoever is in the heavens, and whatsoever is in the earth" are made to do service.

وسخر لكم ما فى السموات و ما فى الارض جميعاً منه - ان فى ذلك لايات لقوم يتفكرون -

"And hath subjected whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth to be of service to you; they all are from Him. Herein verily are signs for those who reflect." (45 : 13.)

الم تر ان الله سخر لكم ما فى السموات و ما فى الارض و اسبح عليكم نعمه ظاهرة و باطنة -

"See ye not that Allah hath made whatsoever is in the earth of service to you, and been bounteous to you of His favours, inward and outward?" (138 : 20.)

و سخر لكم الليل و النهار و الشمس و القمر و النجوم مسخرات بامرہ ان فى ذلك لايت لقوم يعقلون -

"And he hath subjected the night and the day and the sun and the moon to be of service to you; and (in like manner) the stars to do service by His command. Herein indeed are signs for those who understand." (16 : 12.)

Thus raised in the scale of creation and placed immediately next to God, man's superiority to the rest of creation is further specified by investing him

1. The *Quran*, 95 : 4.

2. *Ibid*, 7 : 10.



with the privilege of living on earth as the vicegerent of God Himself.

و اذ قال ربك للملائكة انى جاعل فى الارض خليفة قالوا اتجعل  
ها من يفسد فيها و يفسك الدماء و نحن نسبح بحمداك و نقديس لك -  
ل انى اعلم ما لا تعلمون -

“ And when thy Lord said unto the Angels : Lo :  
am about to place a vicegerent in the earth, they said  
Wilt Thou place therein one who will do mischief  
therein and shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise  
and extol Thy holiness? He said : Surely I know that  
which ye know not.” (20 : 30.)

و هو الذى جعلكم خلائف الارض و رفع بعضكم فوق بعض درجات  
ليبلونكم فى ما اتيكم -

“He it is who hath placed you as his vicegerents on  
earth and hath raised some of you in rank above  
others, that He may try you in what He hath given  
you.” (6 : 156.)

يادادؤ انا جعلتك خليفة فى الارض فاحكم بين الناس بالحق و لا  
تبع الهوى فيضلك عن سبيل الله -

“O David ! We have appointed thee a vicegerent  
in the earth ; hence judge aright between people, and  
follow not desire that it beguile thee from the way of  
Allah.” (38 : 27.)

Such is the position, such the dignity that  
distinguishes man from the rest of  
creation. It is with this consciousness  
that he is required to pursue his path in life. Not

Free  
Agent

merely this, he is made aware of another truth of his nature. The *Quran* declares that man is not born with any stigma attached to his soul. He is not born an untouchable or handicapped with the pollution of any original sin, committed either by himself in a previous birth of which he has no knowledge or by any of his remote ancestor. He is, as the *Quran* says, born with a balanced soul, without any inherent weakness therein and free of any obligations to suffer for any action except his own. His relation to God is thus equalized amongst his own kind, and no distinction in this respect is made between man and woman.

من اهتدى فانما يهتدى لنفسه ومن ضل فانما يضل عليها ولا  
تزر وازرة وزر اخرى -

“Whosoever followeth the right course, it is only for the good of his own soul that he doeth so; and whosoever followeth the wrong course doeth so to his own hurt. No responsible soul shall bear another’s responsibility.” (17 : 15.)

انى لا اضيع عمل عامل منكم من ذكر او انثى - بعضكم من بعض -

“I will not suffer the work of any among you that worketh, whether male or female, to be lost; the one of you is of the other.” (3 : 194.)

ونفس وما سويها فالههنا فجورها و تقويها قد افلح من زكها  
وقد خاب من دسها -

“By the soul and Him who balanced it and infused into the same the sense of discrimination and the power of choosing between the wrong and the right, happy is he who keepeth it pure, and unhappy is he who corrupteth it.” (91 : 7-10.)

The truth of the last verse is expressed by the  
 A *Quran* in the form of a paradox, each  
 paradox side of which is equally true.

لقد خلقنا الانسان في احسن تقويم - ثم رددناه اسفل سافلين -

“Surely, We created man of the goodliest fabric ;  
 then We rendered him the vilest of the vile.” (95 : 4.5.)

Every thinker in every age has had to recognize this paradox in human nature. Speaking through the mouth of Hamlet, says Shakespeare :

“What a piece of work is man ! how noble in reason ! how infinite in faculty ! in form and moving how express and admirable ! in action how like an angel ! in apprehension how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals ! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust ? Man delights not me, no, nor woman neither.”

The task of every religion has been to save man from going down in the scale of life. Some lay stress on ‘faith’ or ‘belief’ as the means of salvation. But ‘belief’ alone is not enough in Islam. ‘Righteous work’ in consonance therewith is equally necessary. That is the way of preserving his good-

liest fabric. Says the *Quran* in continuation of the paradox for the sake of clearing the issue raised therein :

ثم رددناه اسفل سافلين - الا الذين امنوا و عملوا الصلحت  
فلهم اجر غير ممنون فما يكذبك بعد بالدين -

“Then We rendered him the vilest of the vile, save those who believe and work righteously ; for their's is unfailing reward So who can now question the decree ? ” (95 : 5-8.)

So, it is as a free agent and with the choice of **Spiritual Law of Life.** living as a vicegerent of God that man is called upon to function on earth. His role of vicegerency is not difficult of comprehension, if we refer ourselves to the Islamic concept of God in relation to his attributes. ‘Believe and work’ is the commandment ; work, by ‘investing yourself with Divine attributes.’ And to what end ? Here is what the messenger of God himself points out. Says he :

التعظيم لا مر الله والشفقة على عيال الله -

“ Respect the ways of Allah, and be affectionate to the family of Allah ”

Says he again :

الخلق عيال الله فـحب الخلق الى الله من احسن الى عياله -

“ All creatures of God are His family ; and he is the most beloved of God who loveth best His creatures.”

The *Quran* itself expresses :

يا ايها الناس انا خلقناكم من ذكر و انثى و جعلناكم  
شعوبا و قبائل لتعارفوا - ان اكرمكم عند الله اتقاكم - ان الله عليم  
خبير -

“O ye people! surely We have created you of a male and female, and made you tribes and families that you may identify and care for each other; surely the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one among you most mindful of his duty. Allah is Knowing, Fully Aware! (49 : 13.)

من اجل ذالك كتبنا على بنى اسرائيل انه من قتل نفسه بغير  
نفس او فساد فى الارض فكانما قتل الناس جميعا - و من احياها فكانما  
احياء الناس جميعا -

“For that cause We decreed for the children of Israel : Whosoever killeth a human being for other than man-slaughter or mischief in the earth, it shall be as if he hath killed all mankind, and whoso saveth the life of one, it shall be as if he hath saved the life of all mankind.” (35 : 5.)

The function of vicegerency has, therefore, to be exercised towards that end and is to be interpreted in terms of the good that man can offer not only to fellow-man but to every living object on earth who all form together the family of God, everyone of whom has a being from their Maker “unto Whom they will be gathered.”

وما من دابة فى الارض ولا طائر يطير بجناحيه الا اسم

امثالكم - ما فرطنا في الكتاب من شيء ثم الى ربهم يحشرون -

“There is not an animal in the earth, or a flying creature flying on two wings, but they are peoples like unto you. We have neglected nothing in the Book of Our decrees. Then unto their Lord will they be gathered ” (6 : 38.)

How is the task to be performed ? “Believe and work.” Belief without work in accordance therewith is static. Mere philosophic perception of the essence of divinity or contemplation is barren, if it does not generate volition or give movement to human life in consonance with the qualities or attributes of that essence. Mere spiritual exercises of the kind the *Yogis* practise, or psychic achievements, however interesting, will not rise above their character as but the exercises of the mind or of the soul, if they are not subserved to cater for a dynamic moral existence for man. This dynamic morality again is not possible for one who seeks his individual spiritual salvation through the life of the cloister or the cave, or for one who through abnegation of his body fancies his duty to lie in merely nursing his soul. The vicegerency of God on earth is not possible for such types. On the other hand, it is for him who imbues himself with Divine Attributes to the best of his ability and manifests them in devoted service

Display of Divine  
Attributes

to himself and his fellow-beings.

The attributes of God are various, as are His names. They cannot be numbered, since the fullest comprehension of Divine activity is scarcely possible for man circumscribed as he is by the nature of his being. It is not to our immediate purpose to enter upon a philosophic appreciation of this aspect of our question. Our aim is more concrete, and it should suffice if we point out that a Muslim is to believe, in the words of the *Quran*, that "to God alone belong all excellent names"<sup>1</sup>, for perfection is His only in everything that He attributeth to Himself. With this general attitude towards the conception of Divine Attributes, the task before a Muslim is to understand the significance to his life of such of them as are specifically brought to mind in the *Quran* and the *Hadith*. Some of these may come essentially within the purview or pure philosophy or that of mysticism. But a large majority of them suggestive of His love, and knowledge, and power, and justice, and mercy, and His tender concern for the moral purification of man may easily form the subject of social study. Even these make an imposing list, and should lay bare the futility of encasing the Divine Being in any single virtue or

1. The *Quran*, 7 : 180.

attribute, and incarnating Him. God in Islam is above every attribute, and manifests them all in harmonious relation with one another.

Of all the attributes of God with which man should imbue himself in order to fit himself for the task of vicegerency, the primary requisite is the attribute that works for life and movement. It has already been pointed out that the *Quran* makes it explicit that whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth are intended to subserve to the well-being of man. Only, he is required to reflect over the laws of their nature and make a proper use of them. That is the way of achieving power, and the only means of getting at it is knowledge, the acquisition of which, in the words of the Prophet, "is duty on every Muslim."

تعلموا العلم لانه معالم الحلال و الحرام و منار سبل اهل الجنة و هو الانس في الوحشة و الصاحب في الغربة و الدليل على السراء و الضراء و السلاح على الاعداء و الذين عند الاخلاء يرفع الله به اقواما فيجعلهم في الخير قدة وائمة تقتص آثارهم و يقتدى بفعالهم و ينتهي الى رايهم -<sup>1</sup>

"Acquire knowledge," said he. "It enables the possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lights the way to heaven; it is our companion when friendless,

1. *Jame-o-Bayan-il-'Ilm*, p. 27, Cairo, 1320 H.



it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is a weapon against enemies and an ornament among friends. By virtue of it, Allah exalteth nations, and maketh them guides in good pursuits, and giveth them leadership; so much so, that their footsteps are followed, their deeds are imitated, and their opinions are readily accepted and held inviolable."

Says the *Quran* :

يا ايها الذين امنوا استجبوا لله وللرسول اذا دعاكم لما يحييكم<sup>١</sup>-

"O you who believe! Answer the call of Allah and His Messenger, when he calleth you to that which gives you life." (8 : 24.)

وفي الارض ايت للموقنين وفي انفسكم افلا تبصرون-

"And in the earth, there are signs for those who have conviction; and (there are signs) in your own selves. Can ye not see?" (51 : 20-21.)

ولو ان ما في الارض من شجرة اقلام والبحر يمده من بعده سبعة ابحر ما نفدت كلمات الله ان الله عزيز حكيم -

"And if all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea ink with seven more seas to increase it, the words of Allah could not be exhausted. Allah is Mighty, Wise." (31 : 27.)

Knowledge, in Muslim conception, covers every field of life—the life of the vast universe working around man in immediate contact as well as remote, and the life of man himself moving onward with a knowledge of his past. An acquisition of knowledge,

therefore, imposes on him the exercise of not merely his intellectual and physical faculties, but his spiritual: and nothing is prohibited to him in Islam except, probably, probing vainly the veil beyond which his reason or intuition has been found incapable of advance. It is to be pursued for the simple reason that it dispels his ignorance and fits him to live his life usefully. Hence it is, that Islam strongly disapproves of every method devised by selfish groups to segregate others and deny them a natural access to that which is the mainspring of every power and happiness. It establishes the right of man to knowledge of every description for which his aptitudes may suit him, and gives him full sanction to harness the forces of nature through a scientific study of them, and provide himself with every means of material comfort.

But it makes one condition. And herein lies the fundamental distinction between the Islamic and the modern European Culture. It calls upon man to bear in mind the "balance set in his nature," and exercise the power acquired through scientific knowledge in a way that will help him to display in his life such other attributes of God as will equip him to "show affection to the family of God" for which

he has been created with the privilege of representing Him on earth. If I may so express, the impersonal power of Nature that science brings into play is to be given a personality and made conscious of the balance set therein, as in the rest of creation. This is the primary function of Islam, and is to be kept in mind in order to appraise the full import of the injunction which sums up all that is required of a Muslim : " Believe and work. " The attributes of which his knowledge and power are to be the hand-maids, are assiduously brought to mind in the *Quran* at the opening of each chapter which begins " in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. " The commonest and the most compulsory invocation that every Muslim is called upon to make several times every day runs :

الحمد لله رب العالمين - الرحمن الرحيم مالك يوم الدين  
اياك نعبد و اياك نستعين - اهدنا الصراط المستقيم - صراط الذين  
انعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم و لا الضالين ، آمين -

" All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful ; Master of the Day of Judgment ! Thee do we worship ; and of Thee do we seek help. Show us the right path, the path of those whom Thou hast blessed ; and not of those whom Thou hast shown Thy disapprobation, nor of those who have gone astray. " Amen !

This common prayer, to go no beyond the

words of the *Quran*, will give sufficient insight into the duty of man to bear in mind in his day's work the attributes of God, of the beneficence, justice and mercy through which he has to appeal to God for an ordered life, the life of Peace, of Islam.

The God that the Muslim invokes here is *Rabbul-Alamin*. *Rabb* in Arabic is composite in conception referring to the Divine power of giving nourishment and sustenance to all whom He has created with *paternal concern*. So, by calling upon God as *Rabbul-Alamin* or the *Rabb* of all the worlds, seen and the unseen, he at once places himself in harmonious relations with the rest of Divine creation controlled, as he is convinced, by a Being from Whom alone all life and power proceed and from Whom alone therefore all help is to be sought.

And what is this help that he seeks from his Lord? "Show us the right path," he asks, "the path of those whom Thou hast blessed; and not of those whom Thou hast shown Thy disapprobation, nor of those who have gone astray." He merely wants "the balance set in his nature" to be preserved in whatever he thinks and feels and does.

This is the spiritual law of life on which the

society of Islam rests. It makes the life of every true member of it a sacred song of love and action. "My life, my sacrifice and my death are all for Allah." This he affirms by devoting all his talents, informed by knowledge and strengthened by the power that knowledge generates, to the good of the 'Family of God' and thereby he fulfils the trust of Vicegerency that God has placed in him.

ليس البر ان تولوا وجوهكم قبل المشرق والمغرب و لكن البر من آمن بالله و اليوم الآخر والملئكة و الكتاب و النبيين و اتى المال على حبه ذوى القربى و اليتامى و المساكين و ابن السبيل و السائلين و فى الرقاب و اقام الصلوة و اتى الزكوة و الموفون بعهدهم اذا عاهدو والصابرين فى الباس و الضراء و حين الباس أولئك الذين صدقوا و أولئك هم المتقون -

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Books and the Prophets; and giveth his wealth for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and for the redemption of slaves and who observeth proper worship and payeth the poor-due; and those who respect their word when they give it, and the patient in trial and adversity and time of stress: Such—are the sincere, and such the righteous." (2 : 177.)

و اعبدو الله و لا تشركوا به شيئاً و بالوالدين احساناً و بذى القربى و اليتامى و المساكين و الجار ذى القربى و الجار الجنب و الصاحت بالجنب و ابن السبيل و ما ملكت ايماكم -

“And serve Allah. Ascribe nothing as partner unto Him. Show kindness unto parents, and unto near kindred, and orphans, and the needy and unto the neighbour who is of kin and the neighbour who is not of kin, and the fellow-traveller and the wayfarer and those whom your right hand possesses.”  
(4 : 36.)

و ما ادراك ما العقبة - فك رقبة - او اطعام في يوم ذى  
مسغبة - يتيماً ذا مقربة - او مسكيناً ذا متربة - ثم كان من الذين آمنوا  
و تواصلوا بالصبر و تواصلوا بالرحمة - اولئك اصحاب الميمنة و الذين  
كفروا بايتنا هم اصحاب المشئمة -

“ Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Ascent is !

It is to free a slave,  
And to feed in the day of hunger  
An orphan near of kin,  
Or some poor wretch in misery,

And to be of those who believe and exhort one another to forbearance and exhort one another to compassion :

They are of the *right hand*.

But those who disbelieve Our revelations, they are of the *left hand*.” (90 : 12-19.)

Such is the distinction between right and wrong which the *Quran* keeps before our mind, and which is reflected in the commandment we have already

Ethics and  
Jurisprudence

quoted : "Respect the ways of Allah ; and be affectionate to the family of Allah." All that a Muslim feels and thinks or does should be in pursuance of this commandment ; and that is the *right* action. On the other hand, anything that he feels or does in contravention of the commandment is the *wrong* contemplated by the *Quran*. The distinction is thus fixed in the very highest truth of human life, and is manifest in the ethics of Islam, whether it concerns a Muslim's own personal well-being or concerns his relations with his kith and kin, his neighbours, or strangers or even those who are his enemies or his conduct towards the dumb creatures. The personal virtues of kindness, purity, chastity, love, affection, honesty, truth, respect for covenants, forbearance, forgiveness, trustworthiness, justice, mercy and the like are not mere luxuries to be indulged in at convenience, but are indispensable for a right living. And the opposite qualities such as cruelty, indecency, fornication, adultery, uncleanness, dishonesty, falsehood, treachery, hypocrisy, spite, defection, unfaithfulness, and exploitation of the weak which work for the disintegration of society are not only vices but positive sins in Islam.

How mindful is Islam of the moral welfare of

society and of the need for happy relations between its members may be gauged from the high line of conduct laid down even in respect of our references to others.

يا ايها الذين امنوا لا يسخر قوم من قوم عسى ان يكونوا خيرا منهم  
و لا نساء من نساء عسى ان يكن خيرا منهن و لا تلمزح انفسكم  
و لا تنازوا بالالقاب -

و لا تجسسو و لا يغتب بعضكم بعضاً - ايحب احدكم ان يا كل  
لحم اخيه ميتا فكرهتموه - و اتقوا الله - ان الله ثواب رحيم -

“O ye who believe! Let not people laugh other people to scorn, who may be better than themselves: nor let women laugh other women to scorn, who may be better than themselves. Neither defame one another, nor call one another by abusive nicknames.

“Inquire not too curiously into other men’s affairs: nor let the one of you speak ill of another in his absence. Would any of you desire to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely ye would abhor it. Fear Allah: verily, Allah is easy to be reconciled, and is merciful.” (49: 11-12.)

Such is the wide interpretation given to ‘work’ in Islam! The compulsory duties of prayer, fasting the paying of poor-due and pilgrimage are merely the more important details of this work and aim at self-discipline and self-purification, and the cultivation of the highest virtues of unselfish service to one’s fellow-beings and strengthen the sense of



unity and solidarity, first among the members of the faith, and through them among the rest of mankind

It is not possible within the compass that I have set to myself here to touch in any detail the field of the Islamic Jurisprudence which regulate the 'work' of the Muslim society in one of its most important bearings. But we may point out that its principles are precisely the same as have so far been under review. This Jurisprudence is probably the greatest legacy that Islam has left to the modern world, a legacy that stands at this moment in need of sincere understanding, and possible reorientation in the spirit of what was actually done during the lifetime of the Prophet himself, who while sending out an agent to a distant region in Arabia allowed him to use his discretion to meet new situations about which the *Quran* was silent and there were no precedents to follow, provided his discretion was not contrary to the moral laws on which the *Ummat* stands,—laws which aim at the unification of its members and their moral and material well-being.

1. Sir Muhammad Iqbal has an illuminating discussion on this subject of *Ijtihad* in his fascinating work *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Chapter VI—The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam.

*Vide also Islam and Modernism in Egypt* by Dr. Charles C. Adams, Oxford University Press, 1938. It is a study of the Modern Reform Movement inaugurated by the late Shaykh Muhammad Abduh, and gives a valuable bibliography concerning Islam and its new problems.

The duty of every Muslim is to respect these moral laws in order that he might live a righteous life. Resistance to his right to live such a life is not to be tolerated out of meekness or cowardice. Personal wrong or injury may easily be forgiven. Indeed, Islam would prefer forgiveness to retaliation but if forgiveness is likely to promote evil results, or feed further and intensify wickedness in the wrong-doer, retaliation becomes a painful necessity ; but the *Quran* cautions him not to err on the side of excess.

ولا تستوى الحسنة ولا السيئة ادفع بالتي هي أحسن فإذا لذي بينك  
و بينه عداوة كأنه ولي حميم -

“And not alike are the good deed and the evil. Answer an evil deed with a good one, when lo ! he between whom and thee was enmity will be as if he were a warm friend.” (41 : 34.)

و جزاء سيئة مثلها - فمن عفا و ا صلح فاجره على الله - انه  
لا يحب الظالمين -

“The recompense of an ill-deed is an ill the like thereof :—But whosoever pardoneth and amendeth, his reward lieth with Allah. He loveth not wrong-doers.” (42 : 40.)

و الذين اذا اصابهم البغي هم ينتصرون -

“And those who, when wronged, defend themselves.”—(42 : 39.)

و لمن انتصر بعد ظلمه فا و لك ما عليهم من سبيل -

“And whoso defendeth himself after he hath suffered wrong—for such, there is no way (of blame) against them.” (42 : 41.)

ولمن صبر و غفر ان ذالك لمن عزم الاور -

“And verily whoso forbeareth and forgiveth,—this indeed is high-mindedness.” (42 : 43.)

Islam thus restores the corrective to the doctrine of *Ahimsa*, honoured in precept, and curiously disregarded in practice even by some of those who speak of it the loudest. History has given repeated shocks to this doctrine of inept sentimentalism, because it fails to adjust harmoniously the conflicting demands of human nature. The attitude of Islam on the other hand is one of reconciliation, with emphasis laid on forbearance and forgiveness in the hope that the harm done may even partially be neutralized, and better relations follow. But Islam cannot sanctify impotent rage, however euphemistically it may be styled. It cannot call it a virtue to turn the other cheek complacently to welcome a fresh wrong or insult; for that would be the denial of dignity to human nature. In fact a weak man's forgiveness is of no consequence to the wrong-doer. A Muslim is advised to forgive, if he has the strength to do so manfully and because forgiveness in such circumstance is more pleasing to

God, and more certain of happy results. That is true *Ahimsa*; and all honour to those who practise it in that spirit. But it cannot be made into a rule for the generality of mankind, for whom in particular religions have been laid down. So it is, that if a person is impelled to 'answer a wrong with a like thereof,' he is cautioned not to over-reach himself; for retaliation forfeits its spiritual function, if it is not intended to bring home to the aggressor the nature of his offence and its injury to social well-being, or is merely aimed at satisfying personal or class vengeance. It is an absolutely defensive right, and is to be exercised out of conviction that one is acting in the defence of the life which his faith has enjoined upon him to pursue, and holds good in individual, as well as corporate life. And this condition is always to be borne in mind whether the aggressor is from within the camp of the Musalmans or from outside, whether the aggression is directed against the members of the faith or against the non-Muslims, the *Zimmis*, who live under their protection or compose the Muslim body-politic.

• الا من ظلم معاها او انتقصه او كلفه فوق طاقته او اخط منه  
شيئه بغير طيب نفس فا نا حجيجه يوم القيا مة -

“Beware! On the Day of Judgment I shall myself

be the complainant against him who wrongs a Zimmi or lays on him a responsibility greater than he can bear or forcibly deprive him of anything that belongs to him.”<sup>1</sup> (*Hadith*.)

و ان طائفتان من المؤمنين اختلفوا فاصلحوا بينهما - فان بغت احد هما على الاخرى فقا تلوا التي تبغى حتى تحيى الى امر الله فان فأت فاصلحوا بينهما با لعدل و اقسطوا - ان الله يحب المقسطين -

“And if two parties of believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them. And if one party of them doth wrong to the other, fight ye that which doth wrong till it return unto the ordinance of Allah; then, if it return, make peace between them justly, and act equitably.” (49 : 9.)

من يشفع شفاعه حسنة يكن له نصيب منها - و من يشفع شفاعه سيئة يكن له كفل منها و كان الله على كل شئ مقيتاً -

“Whoso interveneth in a good cause will have the reward thereof, and whoso interveneth in an evil cause will bear the consequences thereof. Allah overseeth all things.” (4 : 85.)

اذن للذين يقتلون با نهم ظلموا - و ان الله على نصرهم لقدير -  
ان الذين آخرجوا من ديارهم بغير حق الا ان يقولوا ربنا الله و لو لا دفع الله الناس بعضهم ببعض لهدمت صوامع و بيع و صلوات و مسجد يذكر فيها اسم الله كثيرا - و لينصرن الله من ينصره ان الله لقوى عزيز -

“Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made ; because they have been wronged ; and

Allah is indeed able to give them victory :

“(Because) They have been driven from homes unjustly, for having merely said : Our Lord is Allah. For, had it not been for Allah’s repelling some men by means of others, *cloisters* and *churches* and *synagogues* and *mosques*, wherein the name of Allah is oft mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down. And Allah helpeth him who helpeth His Cause. Verily, He is Strong, Almighty.” (22 : 39-40.)

وقا تلوا فى سبيل الله الذين يقاتلونكم ولا تعتدوا - ان الله لا يحب المعتدين -

“Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not commit excesses. Allah loveth not those who commit excesses ” (2 : 190.)

و ان جنحو للسلام فا جنح لها و توكل على الله انه هو السميع العليم -

“And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and trust in Allah ; surely, He is the Hearing, the Knowing.” (8 : 61.)

How peaceful is the outlook that Islam endeavours to promote in the life of every member of the Faith, may be gleaned from the following earnest and touching prayer of the Prophet himself :

اللهم انى اسئلك خلقاً مستقيماً -

اللهم اعوذ بك ان اظلم او اظلم اواعتدى او يعتدى على او  
اكتسب خطيئة او ذنباً لا تغفره -

“ O Lord ! I ask of Thee the gift of true fellow-feeling.

“ O Lord ! I seek Thy refuge from any wrong that I may do to others, and from any wrong that others may do to me ; from any harshness that I may show to others, and from any harshness that others may show to me ; and from any sin that Thou mayst not forgive.” (*Hadith.*)

Such then is the type of character that Islam aims to evolve for the good of mankind, a type that may truly bear the trust of vicegerency of God on earth. In every role, whether of an individual or a member of a family or society, or a state functionary or a leader in whom is vested the privilege of governance, he is to discharge his duties implicit in the trust.

Democracy  
of Islam

كلکم راع و کلکم مسئول عن رعیتہ -

“ Everyone of you is a shepherd and will be accountable for the welfare of his fold.” (*Hadith.*)

و هو الذى جعلکم خلا ئف الارض و رفع بعضکم فوق بعض درجت لیبلو کم فی ما اتمکم -

“ He it is who hath placed you as His vicegerents on earth and hath raised some of you in rank above others, that He may try you in what He hath given you.” (6 : 165.)

یا داود انا جعلتک خلیفة فی الارض فاحکم بین الناس بالحق ولا تتبع الهوى فیضلک عن سبیل الله -

“ O David ! We have appointed thee a vicegerent in the earth ; hence judge aright between people, and

follow not desire that it beguile thee from the path of Allah " (38 : 26.)

It was to a race of men fulfilling the test referred to in the above passages, a race of vicegerents of God whom the Prophet of Islam had attracted to himself through the sincerity of his inspiring personality—it is to them, and those coming after who may choose to carry their trust that the *Quran* addresses the following words of approbation :

كنتم خير أمة أخرجت للناس تامرون بالمعروف و تنهون عن المنكر  
و تؤمنون بالله -

" Ye are the best society that hath been raised up for mankind Ye enjoin the right conduct and forbid the wrong ; and ye believe in Allah." (3 : 109.)

و كذ لك جعلناكم أمة وسطا لتكونوا شهداء على الناس و يكون  
الرسول عليكم شهيدا -

"We have appointed you a mediatory society, a pattern, that ye may be an example unto mankind, even as the Messenger is an example unto you. (2 : 143.)

Such were those who formed the democracy of Islam 'everyone of whom' as the Prophet said "was like a star by following whom, you will keep to the right path."<sup>1</sup> And those who are conversant with the history of the achievements of this democracy will fully bear out how true was the estimate



the Great Leader had formed of his comrades. They were a body of people whose individual and collective life was lived in the sweetness of resignation to a supremely benevolent Will or Law of God, Who alone was their King, for the preservation of Whose Kingdom on earth everyone of them had to render by righteous work devoted service, a Kingdom transfixed in the conception of a united family of all the creatures of God, each developing in himself every noble trait latent in human nature for the good of mankind.

This democracy of Islam was composed of individuals who conscious of the dignity of manhood recognized no criterion of superiority between themselves except that of righteous conduct and brotherly feeling and mutual service. It was a socialistic organization holding together, in the words of the *Quran*, 'the cable of God' and devoted to the harmonious interaction of the material and the sublime needs of human nature, and keeping in check the disintegrating forces of selfishness, and vitalizing life to disclose a united happiness for all mankind.

At the present moment sincere minds among the followers of the Faith look back wistfully to this golden age of Islam, and yearn for its return. Is it

the political nexus they had enjoyed for a time of democratic character that they would like to be re-established among them? The march of events in the history of Islam and the distribution of the Faithful in many lands subject to divergent political influences may not give a ready answer, although one cannot foresee what may happen in the fulness of time. What is, however, of immediate importance to the stability and progress of the life of Islam is the sustenance and preservation of the spirit of the Faith and the moral basis on which the Muslim society claims its distinction as a brotherhood unique in character as no other organization has shown itself to be in the long history of man. This being the permanent objective of Islam, it is the safety of the social unit that should primarily matter to every well-wisher of mankind. For Islam, if allowed to operate, creates vicegerents of God on earth in the true sense of the term, who will be an asset of incalculable value to the life of any country where they may happen to live. The depression of today in the Islamic world is not due to the Faith, but is the result of its neglect. The line of conduct which gave success and prosperity to the comrades of the Prophet has the same vitality even today. If the present-day Muslims, in spite of rude awakenings, fail to claim their trust, it

will assuredly pass into other hands ; for the trust is a trust from Allah and is for all mankind. Says Bernard Shaw :

“ I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capability to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him—the wonderful man, and in my opinion, far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much-needed peace and happiness. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow, as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.”<sup>1</sup>

Who knows that the Federation of Man is to come that way !

1. *The Genuine Islam*, Singapore, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1936.

# 4

## PRAYERS IN ISLAM

To understand the spirit of a religion, and appraise its value to life and society, read the prayers which its followers generally employ in their communion with God. They will afford an insight into the working of their minds, their thoughts and feelings, and the very object of their lives. There is no prevarication, no hiding or suppression of truth, no luxurious display of poetic fancy when man stands face to face with the Creator of his being to lay bare before Him his heart, and give account of his mundane struggles, his achievements and disappointments, and to ask of Him the things that matter. His prayer, at such a moment, is an expression of a pressing feeling, and is for that reason naturally simple and direct. The higher the note that he strikes in his outpourings, the higher is the quality of the faith that has imprinted itself on his mind, and served as a background to all his activity.

In Islam, the prayer that a Muslim offers whether singly, or in congregation, whether at the

appointed hours of devotion, or at any sudden call or urge from within to turn to his Lord in the midst of his daily work, is all couched in the phraseology of the *Quran* or that of the Prophet's own utterances preserved in the *Hadith*. Even when the suppliant expresses himself in his own tongue, the form of prayer is dictated by the same sources. The same attitude toward his Master, the same conception behind the words used, the same spiritual atmosphere generated by them are revived in his mind, and nothing that he says is not covered by the teachings of his holy Scripture and the example of his holy Prophet.

اللهم انا نستلك من خير ما سالك عبدك و نبيك و نعوذ بك من شر ما استعاذ منه نبيك -

“ O Allah ! I ask of Thee the good that Thy servant and Prophet had asked for himself ; and seek Thy refuge from the evil wherefrom Thy servant and Prophet had sought refuge,”

is the prayer that opens for a Muslim an endless prospect of sublime aspirations. For, what might not the great exemplar have asked of his Lord, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, to whom alone belongeth the Kingdom, from whom alone cometh every strength, whose knowledge encompasseth all, and whose power suffused with love dwelleth every-

where. In a note, such as this, intended to serve as but an appendix to the Muslim view of social life described in the *Concept*, it may seem out of place to refer to the utterances of the Prophet having mystic significance, utterances which reflect the most exalted moods wherein he found himself in moments of the closest communion with Allah, the Holy, the Pure, whom he loved and worshiped with an intensity such as he alone did experience. To but few is given that experience, and that state of mind wherein one may ask of the things that the Prophet had asked for himself. Let us therefore deal with only such prayers of the Prophet as put in mind the aspirations that need to be entertained so as to live a life of purity and social service, a life which is within the reach of every one who may strive or ask for it.

“O Allah ! Make Islam most pleasing to me,” is one of the prayers included here. It is a brief utterance ; yet, how superbly comprehensive ! The suppliant here asks for the path of Islam to be smoothed down for him, to be made most pleasing,—the path of Islam, which, as we have explained in the *Concept*, is truly the path of devotion, of bringing our own will into accord with the Supreme will, or of devoting all our talents to the service of the

highest in life. He asks for a life disciplined in the ways of Allah or the laws intrinsic in our nature. It is a duty, in the discharge of which few there are who can claim not to have faltered. Yet, a true Muslim is to ask of God to make such a task most pleasing to him.

It is towards this end that every prayer of Islam is directed. Mark the character of the following two prayers which have found their way into the regular daily worship of a Muslim. One is the common prayer of Islam and the most compulsory with which every service begins, and the other is what enters into his vespers :

الحمد لله رب العالمين - الرحمن الرحيم - مالك يوم الدين  
اياك نعبد و اياك نستعين - اهدنا الصراط المستقيم - صراط الذين  
انعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم و لا الضالين - آمين

“ All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, the Benficent, the Merciful, Master of the day of Judgment ! Thee do we worship, and of Thee do we seek help. Show us the right path, the path of those whom Thou hast blessed and not of those whom Thou hast shown Thy disapprobation, nor of those who have gone astray. Amen ! ”

This prayer serves as a recurrent reminder to a Muslim of the character of life that he is to pursue,—a life of purity, and of righteous conduct. The same note is struck in the vespers :

اللهم اهدنى فيمن هديت و عافنى في من عافيت و تولنى فيمن توليت و بارك لى فيما اعطيت و قنى شر ما قضيت فانك تقضى و لا يقضى عليك انه لا يزل من واليت تباركت ربنا و تعاليت -

“ O Allah ! Guide me to be of those whom Thou hast guided and preserve me to be of those whom Thou hast preserved and befriend me to be of those whom Thou hast befriended, and bless me in what Thou dost grant me, and protect me from the evil of everything that Thou may'st prescribe for me: for, surely, Thou alone canst prescribe what Thou desireth, and none can over-rule Thee. Surely, he whom Thou befriendest is not disgraced. Blessed art Thou, our Lord, and Exalted ! ” (Hadith.)

Note the spirit of the following prayer :

اللهم اصلح لى دينى الذى هو عصمة امرى و اصلح لى دنياى التى فيها معاشى و اصلح لى آخرتى التى فيها معادى و احينى ما كانت الحيوۃ خيراً الى و توفنى اذا كانت الوفاة خيراً الى و اجعل الحيوۃ زيادة لى فى كل خير واجعل الموت راحة لى من كل شر -

“ O Allah ! Improve my spiritual life, for, that is to be my refuge ; and improve my material life, for, I have to live it ; and prepare me for the life to which I shall have to return ; and keep me alive till it is good for me to be alive, and call me back when it is good for me to die. Lengthen my life in every goodly state, and turn death into bliss before any evil state supervenes. ” (Hadith.)

Death has thus no terror for a Muslim. The thing that he should fear and abhor is wickedness



or evil life ; and it is against this that he has to seek the Divine help and protection. In whatever he may ask for, he is never to forget his primary need for purity of life.

اللهم انى اسالك عيشة نقيه و ميتة سوية و مردأ غير مخزى و لا فاضح -

“ O Allah ! I ask of Thee a pure life and a pure death, and a returning unto Thee that shall not call for reprehension or disgrace. ” (Hadith.)

اللهم ثبتنى و ثقل موازينى و حقق ايمانى و ارفع درجتى و تقبل صلوتى و اغفر خطيئتى و اسالك الدرجات العلى من الجنة آمين

“ O Allah ! Keep Thou me steady, and add weight to my work ; confirm me in my faith, and raise me in Thy regard, and accept my worship, and shield me from sins, and bless me with high places in heaven. Amen ! ” (Hadith.)

اللهم انى ضعيف فقوفى رضاك ضعفى و خذ الى الخير بناصيتى واجعل الاسلام متسهل رضى -

“ O Allah ! I am truly weak ; turn my weakness into strength that I may follow Thy will, and draw me towards goodness ; and make Islam most pleasing to me. ” (Hadith.)

اللهم انى اسالك خير ما آتى و خير ما اعمل و خير ما بطن و خير ما ظهر و الدرجات العلى من الجنة آمين -

“ O Allah ! I beseech Thee to grant me goodness

in my speech, and goodness in my thought and action, and goodness in my inward and outward aspects, and high places in heaven. Amen ! ” (Hadith.)

اللهم احفظني بالاسلام قاعداً و احفظني بالاسلام راقداً و لا تشمت بي عدواً و لا حاسداً -

“ O Allah ! help me to stand in Islam, to sit in Islam, and to sleep in Islam ; and do not let my enemies or the jealous rejoice over my trials.” (Hadith.)

اللهم انى اعوذ بك من علم لا ينفع و من قلب لا يخشع و من نفس لا تشبع و من دعاء لا يسمع اللهم انى اعوذ بك من هولاء الاربع -

“ O Allah ! seek Thy refuge from the knowledge of that which brings no good, and from that mind that has no fear of God, and from that desire that cannot be satiated, and from that prayer that cannot be entertained. O Allah ! I seek refuge from these.” (Hadith.)

اللهم احسن عاقبتنا فى الامور كلها و اجرنا من خزى الدنيا و عذاب الآخرة -

“ O Allah ! Make every action of mine sublime in its outcome ; and save me from disgrace in this world and from chastisement in the hereafter.” (Hadith.)

ربنا لا تواخذنا ان نسينا او اخطانا ربنا و لا تحمل علينا اصرأ كما حملته على الذين من قبلنا ربنا و لا تحملنا ما لا طاقة لنا به و اعف عنا و اغفر لنا و ارحمنا انت مولانا فانصرنا على القوم الكافرين -

“Our Lord ! Call us not to account if we have forgotten or erred in anything. Our Lord ! Lay not on us a burden such as Thou hadst lain on those gone before us. Our Lord ! Lay not on us a burden heavier than we have the strength to bear. Wipe out the faults that we have committed, and shield us from any in future, and have mercy on us. Thou art our Lord ! Give us help against those who live in disbelief.” (*Quran.*)

اللهم انى ظلمت نفسى ظلماً كثيراً و لا يغفر الذنوب الا انت - فاغفرلى مغفرة من عندك و ارحمنى انك انت الغفور الرحيم -

“O Allah ! Surely, I have done great injustice to myself, and none can wipe out my sins but Thou ; therefore, grant me Thy protection, and have mercy on me ; surely, Thou alone art the Protector, the Merciful !” (*Quran.*)

يا حى يا قيوم برحمتك نستغيث اصلح لنا شأننا و احوالنا كلها ولا تكلنا الى انفسنا طرفة عين -

“O Ever-Living Providence ! I crave of Thee, through Thy grace, to correct every aspect of my life, and I pray Thee never for a moment to deliver me to my desires.” (*Hadith.*)

اللهم انى آعوذ برضاك من سخطك و بمعا فاتك من عقوبتك و اعوذ بك منك لا احصى ثناء عليك انت كما أثنيت على نفسك -

“O Allah ! I seek refuge from Thy disapprobation in Thy approbation ; from Thy chastisement in Thy forgiveness. O Allah ! I seek refuge from Thee in

Thee. O Allah! I cannot sufficiently extol Thee; for, Thou alone canst extol Thyself." (Hadith.)

اللهم انى ضعيف فقونى و انى ذليل فاعزنى و انى فقير فارزقنى اللهم باعد بينى و بين خطايى كما باعدت بين المشرق و المغرب -

"O Allah! I am weak; give me strength. I am lowly; give me honour; I am indigent; give me subsistence, and create a distance between me and wickedness such as there is between the East and the West." (Hadith.)

اللهم لا تدع لنا ذنباً الا غفرته و لا هما الا فرجته و لا ديناً الا قضيته و لا حاجة من حوائج الدنيا و الآخرة الا قضيتها يا الرحيم -

"O Allah! I beseech Thee to let no sin of mine remain unforgiven, no worry unremoved, no debt unpaid, and no want of this or of the life coming after unsatisfied. O Thou kindest of the kind!" (Hadith.)

اللهم لا سهل الا ما جعلته سهلاً وانت تجعل الحزن سهلاً اذا شئت لا اله الا الله الحليم الكريم سبحانه الله رب العرش العظيم الحمد لله رب العالمين اسالك موجبات رحمتك و عزائم مغفرتك و العصمة من كل ذنب و الغنيمة من كل بر -

"O Allah! There is nothing easy of achievement except what Thou so maketh: and Thou maketh the difficult easy, whensoever Thou liketh. There is no God beside Him, the Forbearing, the Magnanimous, Pure is He, the Master of the highest Throne. Praise is for Him only, the Lord of all the worlds!

"I ask of Thee the qualities which move Thy grace, and forgiveness. I ask of Thee protection from doing harm to anyone, and I ask of Thee the chance of doing good to everyone." (Hadith.)

اللهم انى استخيرك بعلمك و استقدرك بقدرتك و اسالك  
من فضلك العظيم و انك تقدر و لا اقدر و تعلم و لا اعلم و انت  
علام الغيوب -

"O Allah! I seek my well-being through Thy knowledge, and my strength through Thy strength, and I ask of Thy great benevolence; for, verily, Thou art powerful, and I am powerless; I am ignorant, and Thou art Knowing; and Thou knowest all that we do not know." (Hadith.)

In the expression of a Muslim's wishes, there can be no thought of gaining anything at the expense of another. Indeed, there is an intense regard in his prayers for the good and welfare of everyone. The aim of his life is that it may be lived in the presence of the Divine Countenance, and guided by the light emanating therefrom, indeed transformed into light, so that he may be an example and guide to those struggling in darkness.

اللهم انى اسالك لثبات فى الامر و اسالك عزيمة الرشد  
و اسالك شكر نعمتك و حسن عبادتك و اسالك لساناً صادقاً و قلباً  
سليماً و خلقاً مستقيماً و اعوذ بك من شر ما تعلم و اسالك من خير  
ما تعلم و استغفرک مما تعلم انک انت علام الغيوب -

"O Allah! I ask of Thee steadfastness in every

pursuit. I ask of Thee the intent for good action, and the power to thank Thee for Thy benevolence, and to render. Thee devoted service. I ask of Thee the tongue that speaketh truth, and the mind that erreth not, and the gift of true fellow-feeling. I seek Thy refuge from the evil of everything that Thou knoweth; and I ask of Thee the good that lieth in everything that Thou knoweth; and I seek Thy refuge from every sin of which Thou hast knowledge. And verily Thou knoweth all that we cannot know." (Hadith.)

اللهم الف بين قلوبنا واصلح ذات بيننا واهدنا سبل السلام  
و نجنا من الظلمات الى النور و جنبنا الفواحش ما ظهر منها  
و ما بطن و بازك لنا في اسماعنا و ابصارنا و قلوبنا و ازواجنا و  
ذرياتنا و تب علينا انك انت التواب الرحيم -

"O God! Bring affection between us, and reform us, and open for us paths of peace, and take us out of the spheres of darkness into light, and save us from open and concealed sinfulness, and bless us in what we hear, and in what we see, and in what we feel; and bless us in our help-meets and in our children; and turn Thou to us again; for Thou only canst turn in kindness again and again". (Hadith.)

اللهم ما اصبحت بي من نعمة او باحد من خلقك فمك وحدك  
لا شريك لك فلك الحمد و لك الشكر اللهم عافني بدني اللهم  
عافني في سمعي اللهم عافني في بصري لا اله الا انت -

"O Allah! The good that I have received this morning, and that which the other creatures of Thine have received are all from Thee, the One beside whom there is none, Who alone is deserving of praise

and thanksgiving. O Allah ! Give soundness of health to my body ; O Allah ! Give soundness of hearing to my ears ; O Allah ! Give soundness of sight to my eyes. There is no God but Thee." (Hadith.)

اللهم انى اعوذ بك ان اضل او اضل او ازل او ازل او اظلم او اظلم او ابجهل او يجهل على -

"O Allah ! I seek Thy refuge from misleading others, and from being misled by others; from betraying others into error, and from being betrayed into error by others ; from doing any wrong to others and from being wronged by other ; and from drawing others into ignorance and from being drawn into ignorance by others." (Hadith.)

اللهم انى استألك لذة النظر الى وجهك و شوقاً الى لقاءك فى غير خراء مضرة و لا فتنة مضلة اعوذ بك ان اظلم او اظلم او اعتدى او يعتدى على او اكتسب خطيئة او ذنباً لا تغفره -

"Oh Allah ! Bless me always with the joy of Thy sight and the pleasure of beholding Thy Countenance unharmed by anything harmful and disturbed by anything disturbing.

"Oh Allah ! I seek Thy refuge from any wrong that I may do to others, and from any wrong that others may do to me ; from any harshness that I may show to others, and from any harshness that others may show to me ; and from any sin that Thou mayst not forgive." (Hadith.)

اللهم اجعلنا هادين مهتدين غير ضالين و لا مضلين سلمة لاوليائك و حرباً لاعدائك نحب بحبك من احبك و نعادى بعد اوئك

من خالفك من خلقك اللهم هزم الدعاء و عليك الاجابة و هذا الجهد و عليك التكان -

“ Oh Allah ! Make us guides in the path of life, and keep us guided ourselves therein,—neither going astray, nor leading astray. Keep us friendly to those who are Thy friends, and hostile to those who are hostile to Thee. We love him who loveth Thee and hate him who doth hate Thee. Oh Allah ! This is our prayer and it is for Thee to accept it. We are but to try and trust. ” (Hadith )

اللهم اجعل في قلبي نوراً و في بصري نوراً و في سمعي نوراً و عن يميني نوراً و عن شمالي نوراً و من امامي نوراً و من خافتي نوراً واجعل لي نوراً و في عصبتي نوراً و في لحيتي نوراً و في دمي نوراً و في شعري نوراً و في بشري نوراً و في لساني نوراً و اجعل في نفسي نوراً و اعظم لي نوراً و اجعلني نوراً و اجعل من فوق نوراً و من تحتي نوراً اللهم اعطني نوراً -

“ Oh Allah ! Pour light into my heart ; and into my eyes, and into my ears. Pour it to my right and pour it to my left. Pour it in front of me and behind me, and give me light. Pour light into my nerves, and into my flesh, and into my blood, and into my hair and into my skin, and into my tongue, and into my soul, and increase my light, and transform me into light, and surround me with light. O Allah ! Bless me with light. ” (Hadith )



## 5

### HUMANISM IN IQBAL<sup>1</sup>

Iqbal is not merely a great poet but a great philosopher ; and I have wondered whether I could lay emphasis on any one of the two roles more than the other. There was a time when I read Iqbal's poetry with enthusiasm and tried to catch its strains and follow him into the depths of his feelings or soar with him along the flights of his imagination or fancy. But that was when I could feel poetry for its own sake. As years have advanced, the interest in life's poetic expression has had to demand something more than mere aesthetic self-satisfaction. And there have been moments when I have tried to catch the strains of his philosophy as well, and to look at the world, its history, its problems, its very future through the inspirational vision that his philosophy has supplied. That poetry I could still feel today and the voice of that philosophy still hear, but sectional approach to him seems for me now well-nigh impossible. The two are so intertwined that his

1. Paper read on the occasion of the Iqbal Day held at Hyderabad on the 7th January, 1938, a few months before the poet passed away.

utterance appears to me neither pure poetry nor pure philosophy. It is a mixture of the two blended into a political mysticism transcending them both. And so, as I look back at this hour on all his poetic achievements and inwardly wade through the entire range of his poetic experiences, what picture of poet does he flash across my mind ? What does he stand for through all his utterance ? That is the subject of my immediate interest and I propose to give you only a synopsis of it.

I have used the expression 'Political Mysticism' to designate the effect Iqbal has left on me. That expression, I should think, sums up his contribution to world thought at this moment, and I have no doubt in my mind that posterity will judge and remember him by that contribution. It points to the eternal message of life such as dwells and has always dwelt in the very soul of nature ; and holds out an idea of corporate life for mankind such as is so sorely missed at this hour everywhere.

I know, in this great gathering there should be scores of men and women, who may have read the poems of Iqbal times out of number and they may bear out that the poet is spiritually averse to speaking out his mind in a clear matter of fact language.

In the *Jawidnama* he himself confesses :

This artifice of words if of no avail ;  
What my heart containeth, it fails to bring out.  
Many a secret have I disclosed ;  
Yet a thought always lurks behind which words feel  
helpless to sustain ;

The more I speak of it, the more intricate it grows.  
The word and its sound drown it into deeper  
obscurity.

Catch it from the glance of my eye !  
Catch it from my plaintive morning note !

So, you and I have to catch the meaning of his painful music, his poetry, from his own look or form the plaintive half-suppressed note that goes out from him every morning the moment he opens his eyes to the realities of the opening day. Only recently, I had the occasion to dwell with him for a little while under the same roof at Lahore and catch something of his plaintive morning note. What is that look like and that note ? Try to review his entire poetic output in one quick glance and you can visualize something of that look and inwardly listen to something of that note even from here.

That look is that of a political mystic born to poetry. The note is the note of humanism drawing inspiration from the eternal verities of human life. Wearied in body, and weariness reflecting itself from

every feature of his reflective countenance, he retains that glance of his eye which has kept him company all through his life, the glance of a political mystic piercing into the dark spots on the life of nations to comprehend a life to come, a life of emancipation for humanity from the self-imposed shackles of social, intellectual, economic and consequent political thralldom. That is the glance of Iqbal. Now note the voice that proceeds from him. A malignant disease of the throat has rendered that voice somewhat hoarse of late ; but its hoarseness cannot conceal the sharpness of the painful ring that it strikes echoing all round the disturbance gathering in his soul by the fearful reaction of his external world divided into jarring political creeds born of narrow racial or territorial nationalism bent, as he thinks, on its own destruction. That glance of his eye and that ring of his morning voice will live in his poetry to warn and inspire the coming generations because the glance is rivetted on the primary weakness of human nature, *viz.*, national selfishness, and greed, and exploitation of the weak, and because the voice speaks out the truth which alone will save human life, the truth as handed down to him by a successive galaxy of sages and prophets who have worked for the unification of the human race.

People have called him by all sorts of names. It is so easy to give names without knowing. Some call him a communalist, a reactionary. Some go a step further and use better language. They say that he started as an Indian nationalist and developed into a pan-Islamist ; they even call him an apostle of aggressive Islam.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you could believe with me, Iqbal will outlive the momentary usage of all these terms, because none of these terms really reflects the truth about him. As every young man, he at first liked the Immediate. That is the feeling of every one who passes from childhood into adolescence and from adolescence into youth ; it is the Immediate that attracts. Knowledge and life are at this stage circumscribed, and one begins to think that the best in life is in himself and in that which he finds near about him, and he idealizes his own home and he fancies that the rest of the world is of no consequence and is necessarily of an inferior order. So has it been with Iqbal. Before he grew into manhood, he sang of India. That was a time when a wave of nationalistic thought was widely touching the intellectual classes in India ; and Iqbal sang of the land of his birth and of the beauty it possessed. And then begins his manhood, it opens its eyes in the atmosphere of Europe. The time of

manhood is one of experience, of adjustment of values, and this experience he brings with him as he returns home. And then follow reactions to this experience pushing him forward into a state of maturity. If you want to understand Iqbal, you have to bring the whole of his life under review. You cannot cut him into sections and subject him to different evaluation under the stress of unkind political catchwords.

I have tried to understand the mind of this poet and have followed, at times, a very searching line of analysis. And to me, at every stage of his poetic growth, he has appealed pre-eminently as a humanist. His humanism serves as a perennial background to all his utterances. Sometimes it is so pointedly in the foreground that it will be sheer unkindness not to recognise it as the mainspring of his genius. If, as in the spiritual vision of his *Jawidnama*, India interests him, if it pleases or displeases him in this or that aspect of its life, it is because he allows himself to react to it as a humanist; if he feels distressed over the present-day condition of the Muslims all over the world, it is his humanism that feels afflicted; if Europe today looks to him a wilderness of aggressively selfish nationalities, it is the humanism in him that revolts. What Iqbal desires to see is that human life should take a stand

on its own human dignity, and set itself free from narrow tribal, racial, class or territorial temptations, and evolve a brotherhood extending to the ends of the earth which howsoever distributed into groups by the exigencies of time and space should hold together a common moral consciousness, and be linked to each other by the ties of common humanity. That is the Order that he would like to see established on earth and to which he has dedicated all his Muse.

Iqbal's humanism is a matter of conviction to him. As a student of world history he has been inspired by humanistic movements throughout the ages. His writings reveal the influences of the classic humanism of the West, glowing in the course of history into Christian impulses; they reveal also the influences of the humanism of India, and even of ancient Iran. But the humanism that has captured his mind and soul is the humanism of the semitic land, standing midway between the East and the West, the humanism which has given to the world a Christ and a Muhammed, a humanism that brushes aside all barriers of colour and race and country that stand in the way of the fullest fellowship between man and man throughout the globe.

It is under the searchlight of this humanism  
'Depressing           that he looks at the world and  
World Order'       ponders over its problems. The talk

of nationality in India seems to him but a hollow talk. The basis for that common moral consciousness which alone could bind a people is absent here, he thinks. India is to him Asia in miniature, a congerie of caste units showing no inclination to remove the divisional basis of their several group lives and sink their respective individualities in a composite larger whole. He thinks that true democracy cannot thrive on a foundation such as this. The formation of a common moral consciousness calling for social equality which is the essence of a nation demands a price, which Iqbal thinks, the people of India are not, at this moment, prepared to pay.

Under the same searchlight, he looks at Europe, and the sight fills him with grief. Says he in the 'Khizr-i-Rah.'

The democracy of the West is the same old  
organ,  
Which strikes the selfsame note of Imperialism ;  
That which thou regard'st as the fairy Queen of Freedom  
In reality is the demon of autocracy clothed in  
the garb of democracy.  
Legislatures, reforms, concessions and rights  
In the materia medica of the West are but sweet  
narcotics  
The heated discussions at Peace conferences.  
Are but the camouflage of capitalists.  
Thou tak'st mere illusion for a garden,  
O thou fool ! a cage for the nest.



The above outburst is due to the fact that the democracy of the Western states of Europe does not fit into his humanism. Nor has he any gentle word for the Communistic order of life in Soviet Russia, or for Fascism or Nazism. Marx, he thinks, would like to idealize equality of bellies, and Nietzsche, the inspirer of modern Germany, would exult at the elimination of the weak. Even the League of Nations, he thinks, is a society formed to parcel out between themselves the shrouds of dead bodies. Iqbal's humanism would have none of these. He fully recognizes the immense value of the sciences that Europe has developed. But he bewails that the human touch is lacking. In moments of trial, they betray humanity, in the name of territorial nationalism!. He also would heartily appreciate the life of action which characterizes Europe, but is grieved to see that that action does not conduce to the universal good of all mankind. His faith therefore holds anchor in the humanism which he identifies with Islam. And even when he looks at the condition of those who have been the recipients of this heritage, *viz.*, the Muslims of Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Iran, and India, he fails to see that humanism existing in their midst in any striking form. The European sense of nationalism has cast its snare so powerfully all round that he fears that

it may racialize even their outlook.

But Iqbal does not fall into despair. He believes that the Islamic humanism is still a living force and will work for freeing the outlook of men from geographical limitations, and that it is itself destiny and will not suffer a destiny. He feels that Europe is gradually realizing the initial mistake it made in trampling over the moral and religious convictions of Christianity and resolving itself into a set of mutually ill-adjusted states dominated by interests not human but racial and territorial. He feels that even these mutually ill-adjusted states are today subconsciously feeling the need of a federated Europe, feeling the need of a unity which the Christian church organization originally had given them, but which, instead of reconstructing in the light of Christ's vision of human brotherhood, they considered it fit to destroy under the inspiration of Luther. Iqbal, therefore, feels certain that as the modern world will pass through the throes of its own civilization and see its own ideals shattered by its own hands piecemeal, will it betake itself to the humanism that should prevail to unite mankind.

Till then he would insist that wherever even a semblance of it exists, whether in the East or in the

West, and by whatever name it goes, it should be preserved, at all costs, as a noble heritage of mankind.

## 6

### IQBAL : THE POET AND HIS MESSAGE<sup>1</sup>

When Iqbal passed away in April 1938, his popularity among the Urdu knowing public, especially the Muslim section of it, was at its highest. Already he was the subject of study in educational institutions and literary circles. Many were the critiques contributed to periodicals dwelling on this or that aspect of his poetry or philosophy or religion. So popular had he become at the close of his life, particularly because of the appeal which a large body of his writings made to the Muslim religious sentiment, that Muslim publicists and political leaders always found it to their advantage to quote a line or two from his works just to intensify the effect they sought to produce. In fact he had become a hero with them.

In an atmosphere such as this, it was obviously not possible for anyone "to attempt a critical appraisal of his works as distinguished from the laudatory." That atmosphere still prevails.

1. A Review by Dr. Latif of *Iqbal : The Poet and his Message* by Dr. Sachidananda Sinha, 1947. This was first published in the *Clarion*, Hyderabad Deccan, and produced in several journals.

Indeed, the enthusiasm for the poet is still so much on the increase that it will take years before the educated classes among the Muslims of India could be invited with confidence to investigate, in the light of accepted canons of literary criticism, how much of him is poetry, how much is philosophy and how much neither poetry nor philosophy. Till then—it is only the high-minded and the courageous who can come forward to undertake the task of rescuing Iqbal from the clutches of mere flatterers and unthinking votaries and allow him to appear before the world in his own glory or as he actually lives in his poetical works.

The task of running counter to a prevailing taste is by no means easy. But if one feels a compelling urge to speak out the truth one has, one must be prepared to bear all incidental unpleasantnesses in the firm hope and belief that truth will, soon or late, be heard. It is this earnestness of resolve to discharge a trying duty that is of primary importance in the struggle for purification of literary taste. One may not, however, see the “distant scene.” But the first step will count. It may be that in the zeal to serve the cause of truth one may be tempted to overstate one’s case. That is a danger inherent in every such attempt. But since the tolerance of a wrong idea is more dangerous to the mind of man,

an over-emphasis here and there in its examination may be passed over : for, however clouded the truth on that account, one has the satisfaction to feel that it is the truth nevertheless which has struggled to emerge. From this standpoint, I regard Dr. Sachidananda Sinha's *Iqbal : The Poet and his Message* as a distinct aid to the study of Iqbal.

Dr. Sinha is one of the few living scholars in India who have a deep acquaintance with the literatures and literary traditions alike of the West as of the East. This, together with the fact that he has given years to the study of the poet's writings and all that has been written about him in Urdu and English with the sole object of viewing him in proper perspective, should entitle him to be heard with respect.

Dr. Sinha's work runs into over 500 pages, and there is nothing of importance relating to Iqbal which he has not touched upon in his lengthy dissertation. He has not only reviewed the poet's career, his personality and his works in a general survey, but has given entire chapters to particular issues arising out of that survey. His interest in the subject has led him into a discussion of several problems, metaphysical, political and religious which to a casual reader might appear as digressions but

1. This was written when Dr. Sinha was still alive.

really are side-studies intended to elucidate the standpoint which he wishes to advance. The volume includes appraisals by Sir Amin Jung, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Nawab Mirza Yar Jung and Dr. Amarnath Jha which not only guide the reader in his approach to the mind of Dr. Sinha, but also furnish several valuable hints to the understanding of Iqbal himself.

Dr. Sinha is not happy at all over the fact that Iqbal has chosen Persian rather than Urdu as the vehicle of his serious thoughts, that a good portion of Iqbal's Urdu verse is heavily loaded with Persian and with unfamiliar allusions and that he has drawn for his themes and imagery more on the history and traditions of the Islamic peoples of far off countries than on the life and traditions of his own homeland, India. So pointed is the reference made to these peculiarities and with such frequent recurrence in one form or another, that one is liable to fall into the error of thinking that the author is deliberately creating an atmosphere of prejudice against the poet.

Dr. Sinha's thesis professedly is a serious attempt to reach the truth. But is his method of approach happy or calculated to let him reach the truth ? To me it appears that it is more negative

than positive. The author has expatiated more on what Iqbal *is not* than on what he *really is*. Probably the purpose before him warranted the adoption of such a method. He had evidently grown sick of the fulsome flattery and unhealthy adulation with which the poet's admirers had surrounded his name, hailing him as the greatest among the great in the realms of poetry, philosophy, politics and religion. And he must have felt that it was germane to his purpose to tell his worshipers that Iqbal was neither exactly this nor that as made out by them. But is the attempt properly balanced? It is certainly important to show what Iqbal is really not; but more important and more enduring is to show what he really is. There, the author is not sufficiently communicative. From one end of the book to the other, he stalks along on its pages as an uncompromising iconoclast. He denies to Iqbal a high station in the galaxy of Urdu or Persian poets. The poet never attempted drama, he points out, nor wrote any epic. His poetry is not even lyrical. At best, Iqbal is a didactic poet, says he, but adds that his didacticism is of an inferior quality to that of Lucretius or Wordsworth or Browning. It is all creedistic and dogmatic, never catholic or idealistic. His philosophy, such as it is, he observes, is unduly assertive, unnecessarily polemical and propagandist,



and he refuses to recognize him as the founder of any coherent system of philosophic thought. Indeed, he affirms that "Iqbal is not a sound and faithful interpreter of the Quranic Islam, but—in spite of his pretensions—an expositor of its illiberal side or dogmatism as developed later by dogmatic exegetes," and that he was never inspired by the best in "Muslim faith" as understood by his preceptor the "Pir-i-Rumi." Dr. Sinha even questions the patriotism of Iqbal and gives him the character of a religious fanatic, and Pan-Islamist. Above all, he would not include him among "humanists" because he had wholly identified himself with an exclusive creed namely Islam, as he understood it, and also because "he was too much obsessed with a holy horror of Hinduism as a religion synonymous with idolatry" and was "incapable of appreciating the higher aspects of that religion, or the "value of the fundamental teachings of Hinduism as contributing to the development of humanism."

It may be interesting to note here that this crusade of negations is pursued under a special technique, which I may designate as circumlocutory. In almost every chapter, one may easily detect considerable hesitation on the part of Dr. Sinha to come out with what he wishes to say. It looks as if he is anxious to take shelter in his first moves

under protective coverings before he could feel safe to emerge into light. Quotations from other writers are invoked to prepare the reader to relish what he ultimately is to be fed on. This hesitant movement, almost cat-like, reminds me of that significant phrase of Pope, "willing to wound but hesitating to strike" and is certainly trying to a sensitive reader who goes to Dr. Sinha to know what he has himself to say and to know on what direct evidence from the poet's works he rests his own views.

Whatever the method of approach or the technique observed, Dr. Sinha represents a natural and an inevitable reaction to the deliberately intemperate praise indulged in for so long by Iqbal's votaries. It was high time that they woke up and exercised earnest introspection in the light of what Dr. Sinha has had to say. There is no doubt that a good deal of what he has said is coloured by his own sense of nationalism and by his natural though inordinate love and regard for the lore of ancient India, a lore which embodies for him all that is beautiful in life, but which, to his great regret, he feels, Iqbal has wilfully discarded. There is undue heat too in many of his observations. Partly for this reason, but mainly because he has subjected the poet to a process of dissection and examined

him limb by limb without taking the trouble to interrelate them or viewing him as a whole or as a living organism, Dr. Sinha has not given to us what we had expected to receive from him as the result of his search for truth—a lifelike or a convincingly true picture of Iqbal. He has simply swung the pendulum to the other end.

The truth is yet to be.

THE END

